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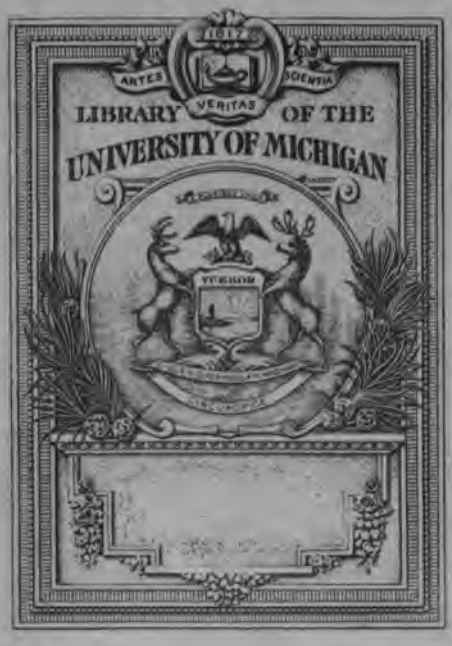
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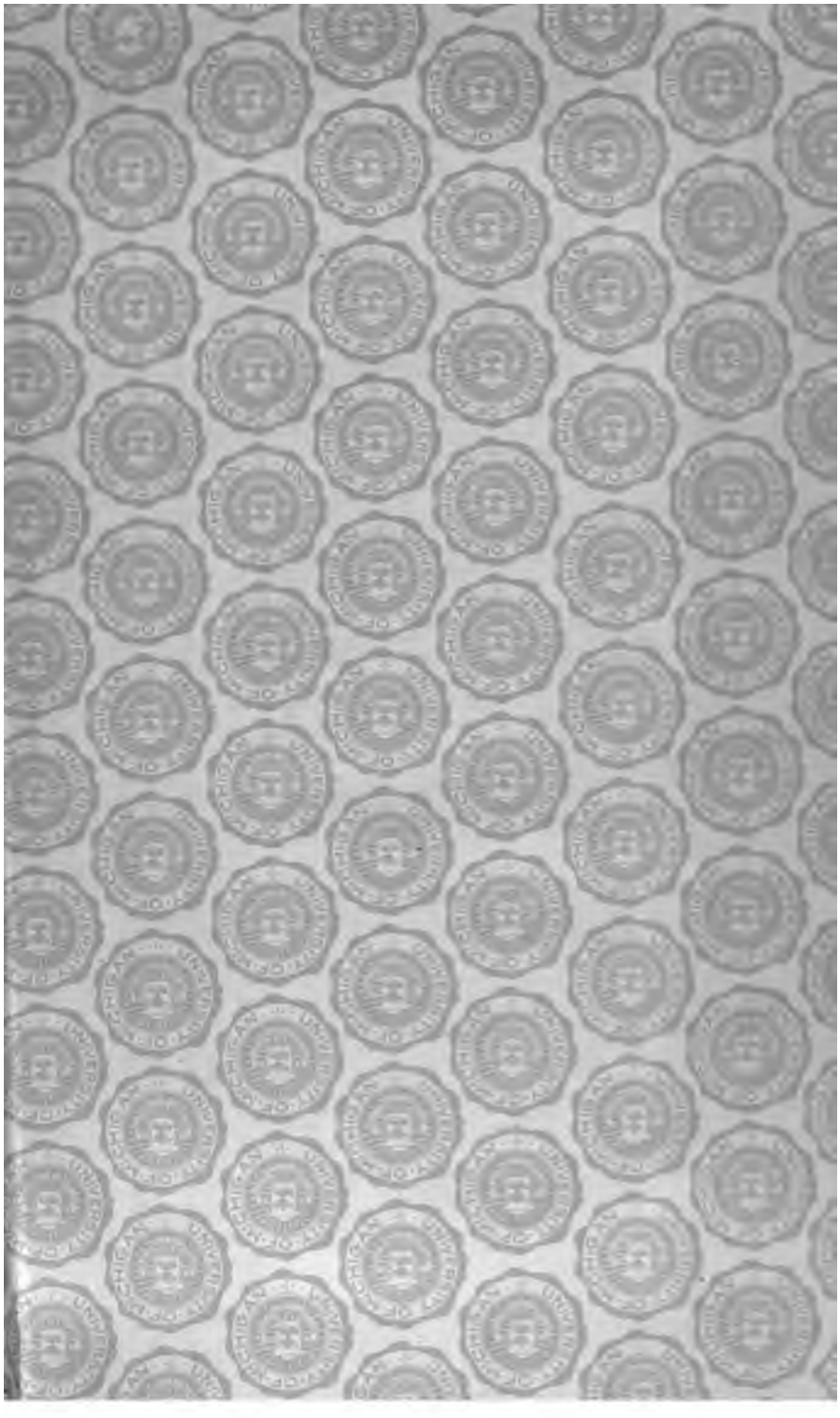

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THE

WORKS

OF

SAMUEL JOHNSON, LL.D.

IN NINE VOLUMES.

VOLUME THE FIFTH.

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THE PLAN

OF AN

ENGLISH DICTIONARY.

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

PHILIP DORMER, EARL OF CHESTERFIELD,

One of his Majesty's principal Secretaries of State.

MY LORD,

WHEN first I undertook to write an English Dictionary, I had no expectation of any higher patronage than that of the proprietors of the copy, nor prospect of any other advantage than the price of my labour. I knew that the work in which I engaged is generally considered as drudgery for the blind, as the proper toil of artless industry; a task that requires neither the light of learning, nor the activity of genius, but may be successfully performed without any higher quality than that of bearing burdens with dull patience, and beating the track of the alphabet with sluggish resolution.

Whether this opinion, so long transmitted, and so widely propagated, had its beginning from truth and nature, or from accident and prejudice; whether it be decreed by the authority of reason or the tyranny of ignorance, that, of all the candidates for literary praise, the unhappy lexicographer holds the lowest place, neither vanity nor interest incited me to inquire. It appeared that the province allotted me was, of all the regions of learning, generally confessed to be the least delightful, that it was believed to produce neither fruits nor flowers; and that, after a

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Oxford English Classics.

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long and laborious cultivation, not even the barren laurel[a] had been found upon it.

Yet on this province, my Lord, I entered, with the pleasing hope, that, as it was low, it likewise would be safe. I was drawn forward with the prospect of employment, which, though not splendid, would be useful; and which, though it could not make my life envied, would keep it innocent; which would awaken no passion, engage me in no contention, nor throw in my way any temptation to disturb the quiet of others by censure, or my own by flattery.

I had read, indeed, of times, in which princes and statesmen thought it part of their honour to promote the improvement of their native tongues; and in which dictionaries were written under the protection of greatness. To the patrons of such undertakings I willingly paid the homage of believing that they, who were thus solicitous for the perpetuity of their language, had reason to expect that their actions would be celebrated by posterity, and that the eloquence which they promoted would be employed in their praise. But I considered such acts of beneficence as prodigies, recorded rather to raise wonder than expectation; and, content with the terms that I had stipulated, had not suffered my imagination to flatter me with any other encouragement, when I found that my design had been thought by your Lordship of importance sufficient to attract your favour.

How far this unexpected distinction can be rated among the happy incidents of life, I am not yet able to determine. Its first effect has been to make me anxious, lest it should fix the attention of the publick too much upon me; and, as it once happened to an epick poet of France, by raising the reputation of the attempt, obstruct the reception of the work. I imagine what the world will expect from a scheme, prosecuted under your Lordship's influence; and I know that expectation, when her wings are once ex-

[a] Lord Orrery, in a letter to Dr. Birch, mentions this as one of the very few inaccuracies in this admirable address, the *laurel* not being *barren* in any sense, but bearing fruits and flowers. Boswell's Life, vol. i. p. 160. EDIT. 1804.

panded, easily reaches heights which performance never will attain; and when she has mounted the summit of perfection, derides her follower, who dies in the pursuit.

Not, therefore, to raise expectation, but to repress it, I here lay before your Lordship the plan of my undertaking, that more may not be demanded than I intend; and that, before it is too far advanced to be thrown into a new method, I may be advertised of its defects or superfluities. Such informations I may justly hope, from the emulation with which those, who desire the praise of elegance or discernment, must contend in the promotion of a design that you, my Lord, have not thought unworthy to share your attention with treaties and with wars.

In the first attempt to methodise my ideas I found a difficulty, which extended itself to the whole work. It was not easy to determine by what rule of distinction the words of this dictionary were to be chosen. The chief intent of it is to preserve the purity, and ascertain the meaning of our English idiom; and this seems to require nothing more than that our language be considered, so far as it is our own; that the words and phrases used in the general intercourse of life, or found in the works of those whom we commonly style polite writers, be selected, without including the terms of particular professions; since, with the arts to which they relate, they are generally derived from other nations, and are very often the same in all the languages of this part of the world. This is, perhaps, the exact and pure idea of a grammatical dictionary; but in lexicography, as in other arts, naked science is too delicate for the purposes of life. The value of a work must be estimated by its use; it is not enough that a dictionary delights the critick, unless, at the same time, it instructs the learner; as it is to little purpose that an engine amuses the philosopher by the subtilty of its mechanism, if it requires so much knowledge in its application as to be of no advantage to the common workman.

The title which I prefix to my work has long conveyed a very miscellaneous idea, and they that take a dictionary

into their hands, have been accustomed to expect from it a solution of almost every difficulty. If foreign words, therefore, were rejected, it could be little regarded, except by criticks, or those who aspire to criticism; and however it might enlighten those that write, would be all darkness to them that only read. The unlearned much oftener consult their dictionaries for the meaning of words, than for their structures or formations; and the words that most want explanation are generally terms of art; which, therefore, experience has taught my predecessors to spread with a kind of pompous luxuriance over their productions.

The academicians of France, indeed, rejected terms of science in their first essay, but found afterwards a necessity of relaxing the rigour of their determination; and, though they would not naturalize them at once by a single act, permitted them by degrees to settle themselves among the natives, with little opposition; and it would surely be no proof of judgment to imitate them in an errour which they have now retracted, and deprive the book of its chief use, by scrupulous distinctions.

Of such words, however, all are not equally to be considered as parts of our language; for some of them are naturalized and incorporated; but others still continue aliens, and are rather auxiliaries than subjects. This naturalization is produced either by an admission into common speech, in some metaphorical signification, which is the acquisition of a kind of property among us; as we say, the *zenith* of advancement, the *meridian* of life, the *cynosure*[b] of neighbouring eyes; or it is the consequence of long intermixture and frequent use, by which the ear is accustomed to the sound of words, till their original is forgotten, as in *equator*, *satellites*; or of the change of a foreign to an English termination, and a conformity to the laws of the speech into which they are adopted; as in *category*, *cachexy*, *peripneumony*.

Of those which still continue in the state of aliens, and

[b] Milton.

have made no approaches towards assimilation, some seem necessary to be retained, because the purchasers of the Dictionary will expect to find them. Such are many words in the common law, as *capias, habeas corpus, præmunire, nisi prius:* such are some terms of controversial divinity, as *hypostasis;* and of physick, as the names of diseases; and, in general, all terms which can be found in books not written professedly upon particular arts, or can be supposed necessary to those who do not regularly study them. Thus, when a reader not skilled in physick happens in Milton upon this line,

——— pining atrophy,
Marasmus, and wide-wasting pestilence,

he will, with equal expectation, look into his dictionary for the word *marasmus*, as for *atrophy*, or *pestilence;* and will have reason to complain if he does not find it.

It seems necessary to the completion of a dictionary, designed not merely for criticks, but for popular use, that it should comprise, in some degree, the peculiar words of every profession; that the terms of war and navigation should be inserted, so far as they can be required by readers of travels, and of history; and those of law, merchandise, and mechanical trades, so far as they can be supposed useful in the occurrences of common life.

But there ought, however, to be some distinction made between the different classes of words; and, therefore, it will be proper to print those which are incorporated into the language in the usual character, and those which are still to be considered as foreign, in the Italick letter.

Another question may arise with regard to appellatives, or the names of species. It seems of no great use to set down the words *horse, dog, cat, willow, alder, daisy, rose,* and a thousand others, of which it will be hard to give an explanation, not more obscure than the word itself. Yet it is to be considered, that, if the names of animals be inserted, we must admit those which are more known, as well as those with which we are, by accident, less acquainted; and if they are all rejected, how will the reader

be relieved from difficulties produced by allusions to the crocodile, the chameleon, the ichneumon, and the hyæna? If no plants are to be mentioned, the most pleasing part of nature will be excluded, and many beautiful epithets be unexplained. If only those which are less known are to be mentioned, who shall fix the limits of the reader's learning? The importance of such explications appears from the mistakes which the want of them has occasioned: had Shakespeare had a dictionary of this kind, he had not made the *woodbine* entwine the *honeysuckle;* nor would Milton, with such assistance, have disposed so improperly of his *ellops* and his *scorpion.*

Besides, as such words, like others, require that their accents should be settled, their sounds ascertained, and their etymologies deduced, they cannot be properly omitted in the Dictionary. And though the explanations of some may be censured as trivial, because they are almost universally understood, and those of others as unnecessary, because they will seldom occur, yet it seems not proper to omit them; since it is rather to be wished that many readers should find more than they expect, than that one should miss what he might hope to find.

When all the words are selected and arranged, the first part of the work to be considered is the orthography, which was long vague and uncertain; which at last, when its fluctuation ceased, was in many cases settled but by accident; and in which, according to your Lordship's observation, there is still great uncertainty among the best criticks: nor is it easy to state a rule by which we may decide between custom and reason, or between the equiponderant authorities of writers alike eminent for judgment and accuracy.

The great orthographical contest has long subsisted between etymology and pronunciation. It has been demanded, on one hand, that men should write as they speak; but, as it has been shown that this conformity never was attained in any language, and that it is not more easy to persuade men to agree exactly in speaking than in

writing, it may be asked, with equal propriety, why men do not rather speak as they write. In France, where this controversy was at its greatest height, neither party, however ardent, durst adhere steadily to their own rule; the etymologist was often forced to spell with the people; and the advocate for the authority of pronunciation found it sometimes deviating so capriciously from the received use of writing, that he was constrained to comply with the rule of his adversaries, lest he should lose the end by the means, and be left alone by following the crowd.

When a question of orthography is dubious, that practice has, in my opinion, a claim to preference which preserves the greatest number of radical letters, or seems most to comply with the general custom of our language. But the chief rule which I propose to follow is, to make no innovation without a reason sufficient to balance the inconvenience of change; and such reasons I do not expect often to find. All change is of itself an evil, which ought not to be hazarded but for evident advantage; and as inconstancy is in every case a mark of weakness, it will add nothing to the reputation of our tongue. There are, indeed, some who despise the inconveniencies of confusion, who seem to take pleasure in departing from custom, and to think alteration desirable for its own sake; and the reformation of our orthography, which these writers have attempted, should not pass without its due honours, but that I suppose they hold singularity its own reward, or may dread the fascination of lavish praise.

The present usage of spelling, where the present usage can be distinguished, will, therefore, in this work, be generally followed; yet there will be often occasion to observe, that it is in itself inaccurate, and tolerated rather than chosen; particularly when, by the change of one letter or more, the meaning of a word is obscured, as in *farrier* for *ferrier*, as it was formerly written, from *ferrum*, or *fer*; in *gibberish* for *gebrish*, the jargon of *Geber*, and his chymical followers, understood by none but their own tribe. It will be likewise sometimes proper to trace back the

orthography of different ages, and show by what gradations the word departed from its original.

Closely connected with orthography is pronunciation, the stability of which is of great importance to the duration of a language, because the first change will naturally begin by corruptions in the living speech. The want of certain rules for the pronunciation of former ages, has made us wholly ignorant of the metrical art of our ancient poets; and since those who study their sentiments regret the loss of their numbers, it is surely time to provide that the harmony of the moderns may be more permanent.

A new pronunciation will make almost a new speech; and, therefore, since one great end of this undertaking is to fix the English language, care will be taken to determine the accentuation of all polysyllables by proper authorities, as it is one of those capricious phænomena which cannot be easily reduced to rules. Thus there is no antecedent reason for difference of accent in the two words *dolorous* and *sonorous*; yet of the one Milton gives the sound in this line,

He pass'd o'er many a region *dolorous*;

and that of the other in this,

Sonorous metal blowing martial sounds.

It may be likewise proper to remark metrical licenses, such as contractions, *generous, gen'rous; reverend, rev'rend;* and coalitions, as *region, question.*

But still it is more necessary to fix the pronunciation of monosyllables, by placing with them words of correspondent sound, that one may guard the other against the danger of that variation, which, to some of the most common, has already happened; so that the words *wound* and *wind,* as they are now frequently pronounced, will not rhyme to *sound* and *mind.* It is to be remarked, that many words written alike are differently pronounced, as *flow,* and *brow:* which may be thus registered, *flow, woe; brow, now;* or of which the exemplification may be generally given by a distich: thus the words *tear,* or lacerate

and *tear*, the water of the eye, have the same letters, but may be distinguished thus, *tear, dare; tear, peer.*

Some words have two sounds, which may be equally admitted, as being equally defensible by authority. Thus *great* is differently used:

> For Swift and him despised the farce of state,
> The sober follies of the wise and *great.* POPE.
>
> As if misfortune made the throne her seat,
> And none could be unhappy but the *great.* ROWE.

The care of such minute particulars may be censured as trifling; but these particulars have not been thought unworthy of attention in more polished languages.

The accuracy of the French, in stating the sounds of their letters, is well known; and, among the Italians, Crescembeni has not thought it unnecessary to inform his countrymen of the words which, in compliance with different rhymes, are allowed to be differently spelt, and of which the number is now so fixed, that no modern poet is suffered to increase it.

When the orthography and pronunciation are adjusted, the etymology or derivation is next to be considered, and the words are to be distinguished according to the different classes, whether simple, as *day, light,* or compound, as *day-light;* whether primitive, as, to *act,* or derivative, as *action, actionable; active, activity.* This will much facilitate the attainment of our language, which now stands in our dictionaries a confused heap of words without dependence, and without relation.

When this part of the work is performed, it will be necessary to inquire how our primitives are to be deduced from foreign languages, which may be often very successfully performed by the assistance of our own etymologists. This search will give occasion to many curious disquisitions, and sometimes, perhaps, to conjectures, which to readers unacquainted with this kind of study, cannot but appear improbable and capricious. But it may be reasonably imagined, that what is so much in the power of

men as language, will very often be capriciously conducted. Nor are these disquisitions and conjectures to be considered altogether as wanton sports of wit, or vain shows of learning; our language is well known not to be primitive or self-originated, but to have adopted words of every generation, and, either for the supply of its necessities, or the increase of its copiousness, to have received additions from very distant regions; so that in search of the progenitors of our speech, we may wander from the tropick to the frozen zone, and find some in the valleys of Palestine, and some upon the rocks of Norway.

Beside the derivation of particular words, there is likewise an etymology of phrases. Expressions are often taken from other languages; some apparently, as to *run a risk, courir un risque;* and some even when we do not seem to borrow their words; thus, to *bring about*, or accomplish, appears an English phrase, but in reality our native word *about* has no such import, and is only a French expression, of which we have an example in the common phrase *venir à bout d'une affaire.*

In exhibiting the descent of our language, our etymologists seem to have been too lavish of their learning, having traced almost every word through various tongues, only to show what was shown sufficiently by the first derivation. This practice is of great use in synoptical lexicons, where mutilated and doubtful languages are explained by their affinity to others more certain and extensive, but is generally superfluous in English etymologies. When the word is easily deduced from a Saxon original, I shall not often inquire further, since we know not the parent of the Saxon dialect; but when it is borrowed from the French, I shall show whence the French is apparently derived. Where a Saxon root cannot be found, the defect may be supplied from kindred languages, which will be generally furnished with much liberality by the writers of our glossaries; writers who deserve often the highest praise, both of judgment and industry, and may expect at least to be mentioned with honour by me, whom they have freed from

the greatest part of a very laborious work, and on whom they have imposed, at worst, only the easy task of rejecting superfluities.

By tracing in this manner every word to its original, and not admitting, but with great caution, any of which no original can be found, we shall secure our language from being overrun with *cant*, from being crowded with low terms, the spawn of folly or affectation, which arise from no just principles of speech, and of which, therefore, no legitimate derivation can be shown.

When the etymology is thus adjusted, the analogy of our language is next to be considered; when we have discovered whence our words are derived, we are to examine by what rules they are governed, and how they are inflected through their various terminations. The terminations of the English are few, but those few have hitherto remained unregarded by the writers of our dictionaries. Our substantives are declined only by the plural termination, our adjectives admit no variation but in the degrees of comparison, and our verbs are conjugated by auxiliary words, and are only changed in the preter tense.

To our language may be, with great justness, applied the observation of Quintilian, that speech was not formed by an analogy sent from heaven. It did not descend to us in a state of uniformity and perfection, but was produced by necessity, and enlarged by accident, and is, therefore, composed of dissimilar parts, thrown together by negligence, by affectation, by learning or by ignorance.

Our inflections, therefore, are by no means constant, but admit of numberless irregularities, which in this Dictionary will be diligently noted. Thus *fox* makes in the plural *foxes*, but *ox* makes *oxen*. *Sheep* is the same in both numbers. Adjectives are sometimes compared by changing the last syllable, as *proud, prouder, proudest;* and sometimes by particles prefixed, as *ambitious, more* ambitious, *most* ambitious. The forms of our verbs are subject to great variety; some end their preter tense in *ed*, as I *love*, I *loved*, I have *loved;* which may be called the regu-

lar form, and is followed by most of our verbs of southern original. But many depart from this rule, without agreeing in any other, as I *shake*, I *shook*, I have *shaken* or *shook*, as it is sometimes written in poetry; I *make*, I *made*, I have *made*; I *bring*, I *brought*; I *wring*, I *wrung*; and many others, which, as they cannot be reduced to rules, must be learned from the dictionary rather than the grammar.

The verbs are likewise to be distinguished according to their qualities, as actives from neuters; the neglect of which has already introduced some barbarities in our conversation, which, if not obviated by just animadversions, may in time creep into our writings.

Thus, my Lord, will our language be laid down, distinct in its minutest subdivisions, and resolved into its elemental principles. And who upon this survey can forbear to wish, that these fundamental atoms of our speech might obtain the firmness and immutability of the primogenial and constituent particles of matter, that they might retain their substance while they alter their appearance, and be varied and compounded, yet not destroyed?

But this is a privilege which words are scarcely to expect: for, like their author, when they are not gaining strength, they are generally losing it. Though art may sometimes prolong their duration, it will rarely give them perpetuity; and their changes will be almost always informing us, that language is the work of man, of a being from whom permanence and stability cannot be derived.

Words having been hitherto considered as separate and unconnected, are now to be likewise examined as they are ranged in their various relations to others by the rules of syntax or construction, to which I do not know that any regard has been yet shown in English dictionaries, and in which the grammarians can give little assistance. The syntax of this language is too inconstant to be reduced to rules, and can be only learned by the distinct consideration of particular words as they are used by the best authors. Thus, we say, according to the present modes of

speech, The soldier died *of* his wounds, and the sailor perished *with* hunger; and every man acquainted with our language would be offended with a change of these particles, which yet seem originally assigned by chance, there being no reason to be drawn from grammar why a man may not, with equal propriety, be said to die *with* a wound or perish *of* hunger.

Our syntax, therefore, is not to be taught by general rules, but by special precedents; and in examining whether Addison has been with justice accused of a solecism in this passage,

> The poor inhabitant——
> Starves in the midst of nature's bounty curst,
> And in the loaden vineyard *dies for thirst*——

it is not in our power to have recourse to any established laws of speech; but we must remark how the writers of former ages have used the same word, and consider whether he can be acquitted of impropriety, upon the testimony of Davies, given in his favour by a similar passage:

> She loaths the wat'ry glass wherein she gaz'd,
> And shuns it still, although *for thirst she dye.*

When the construction of a word is explained, it is necessary to pursue it through its train of phraseology, through those forms where it is used in a manner peculiar to our language, or in senses not to be comprised in the general explanations; as from the verb *make* arise these phrases, to *make love*, to *make an end*, to *make way*; as, he *made way* for his followers, the ship *made way* before the wind; to *make a bed*, to *make merry*, to *make a mock*, to *make presents*, to *make a doubt*, to *make out an assertion*, to *make good* a breach, to *make good* a cause, to *make nothing* of an attempt, to *make lamentation*, to *make a merit*, and many others which will occur in reading with that view, and which only their frequency hinders from being generally remarked.

The great labour is yet to come, the labour of interpreting these words and phrases with brevity, fulness, and perspicuity; a task of which the extent and intricacy is sufficiently shown by the miscarriage of those who have

generally attempted it. This difficulty is increased by the necessity of explaining the words in the same language; for there is often only one word for one idea; and though it be easy to translate the words *bright, sweet, salt, bitter,* into another language, it is not easy to explain them.

With regard to the interpretation, many other questions have required consideration. It was some time doubted whether it be necessary to explain the things implied by particular words; as under the term *baronet,* whether, instead of this explanation, *a title of honour next in degree to that of baron,* it would be better to mention more particularly the creation, privileges, and rank of baronets; and whether, under the word *barometer,* instead of being satisfied with observing that it is *an instrument to discover the weight of the air,* it would be fit to spend a few lines upon its invention, construction, and principles. It is not to be expected, that with the explanation of the one the herald should be satisfied, or the philosopher with that of the other; but since it will be required by common readers, that the explications should be sufficient for common use; and since, without some attention to such demands, the Dictionary cannot become generally valuable, I have determined to consult the best writers for explanations real as well as verbal; and, perhaps, I may at last have reason to say, after one of the augmenters of Furetier, that my book is more learned than its author.

In explaining the general and popular language, it seems necessary to sort the several senses of each word, and to exhibit first its natural and primitive signification; as,

To *arrive,* to reach the shore in a voyage: he *arrived* at a safe harbour.

Then to give its consequential meaning, to *arrive,* to reach any place, whether by land or sea; as, he *arrived* at his country-seat.

Then its metaphorical sense, to obtain any thing desired; as, he *arrived* at a peerage.

Then to mention any observation that arises from the

comparison of one meaning with another; as, it may be remarked of the word *arrive*, that, in consequence of its original and etymological sense, it cannot be properly applied but to words signifying something desirable; thus we say, a man *arrived* at happiness; but cannot say, without a mixture of irony, he *arrived* at misery.

Ground, the earth, generally as opposed to the air or water. He swam till he reached *ground*. The bird fell to the *ground*.

Then follows the accidental or consequential signification in which *ground* implies any thing that lies under another; as, he laid colours upon a rough *ground*. The silk had blue flowers on a red *ground*.

Then the remoter or metaphorical signification; as, the *ground* of his opinion was a false computation. The *ground* of his work was his father's manuscript.

After having gone through the natural and figurative senses, it will be proper to subjoin the poetical sense of each word, where it differs from that which is in common use; as *wanton*, applied to any thing of which the motion is irregular without terrour; as,

In *wanton* ringlets curl'd her hair.

To the poetical sense may succeed the familiar; as of *toast*, used to imply the person whose health is drunk; as,

The wise man's passion, and the vain man's *toast*. POPE.

The familiar may be followed by the burlesque; as of *mellow*, applied to good fellowship:

In all thy humours, whether grave or *mellow*. ADDISON.

Or of *bite*, used for *cheat*:

———More a dupe than wit,
Sappho can tell you how this man was *bit*. POPE.

And, lastly, may be produced the peculiar sense, in which a word is found in any great author: as *faculties*, in Shakespeare, signifies the powers of authority:

——This Duncan
Has borne his *faculties* so meek, has been
So clear in his great office, that, &c.

The signification of adjectives may be often ascertained by uniting them to substantives; as, *simple swain, simple sheep.* Sometimes the sense of a substantive may be elucidated by the epithets annexed to it in good authors; as, the *boundless ocean,* the *open lawns:* and where such advantage can be gained by a short quotation, it is not to be omitted.

The difference of signification in words generally accounted synonymous, ought to be carefully observed; as in *pride, haughtiness, arrogance:* and the strict and critical meaning ought to be distinguished from that which is loose and popular; as in the word *perfection,* which, though in its philosophical and exact sense it can be of little use among human beings, is often so much degraded from its original signification, that the academicians have inserted in their work, *the perfection of a language,* and, with a little more licentiousness, might have prevailed on themselves to have added *the perfection of a dictionary.*

There are many other characters of words which it will be of use to mention. Some have both an active and passive signification; as *fearful,* that which gives or which feels terrour; a *fearful prodigy,* a *fearful hare.* Some have a personal, some a real meaning; as, in opposition to *old,* we use the adjective *young* of animated beings, and *new* of other things. Some are restrained to the sense of praise, and others to that of disapprobation; so commonly, though not always, we *exhort* to good actions, we *instigate* to ill; we *animate, incite* and *encourage* indifferently to good or bad. So we usually *ascribe* good, but *impute* evil; yet neither the use of these words, nor, perhaps, of any other in our licentious language, is so established as not to be often reversed by the correctest writers. I shall, therefore, since the rules of style, like those of law, arise from precedents often repeated, collect the testimonies on both sides, and endeavour to discover and promulgate the decrees of custom, who has so long possessed, whether by right or by usurpation, the sovereignty of words.

It is necessary, likewise, to explain many words by their

opposition to others; for contraries are best seen when they stand together. Thus the verb *stand* has one sense, as opposed to *fall*, and another, as opposed to *fly*; for want of attending to which distinction, obvious as it is, the learned Dr. Bentley has squandered his criticism to no purpose, on these lines of Paradise Lost:

> —— In heaps
> Chariot and charioteer lay overturn'd,
> And fiery foaming steeds. What *stood, recoil'd*
> O'erwearied, through the faint satanic host,
> Defensive scarce, or with pale fear surpris'd,
> *Fled* ignominious. ———

"Here," says the critick, "as the sentence is now read, we find that what *stood, fled:*" and, therefore, he proposes an alteration, which he might have spared, if he had consulted a dictionary, and found that nothing more was affirmed than, that those *fled* who did *not fall.*

In explaining such meanings as seem accidental and adventitious, I shall endeavour to give an account of the means by which they were introduced. Thus, to *eke out* any thing, signifies to lengthen it beyond its just dimensions, by some low artifice; because the word *eke* was the usual refuge of our old writers, when they wanted a syllable. And *buxom*, which means only *obedient*, is now made, in familiar phrases, to stand for *wanton*; because in an ancient form of marriage, before the Reformation, the bride promised complaisance and obedience, in these terms: "I will be bonair and *buxom* in bed and at board."

I know well, my Lord, how trifling many of these remarks will appear, separately considered, and how easily they may give occasion to the contemptuous merriment of sportive idleness, and the gloomy censures of arrogant stupidity; but dulness it is easy to despise, and laughter it is easy to repay. I shall not be solicitous what is thought of my work, by such as know not the difficulty or importance of philological studies; nor shall think those that have done nothing, qualified to condemn me for doing little. It may not, however, be improper to remind them,

that no terrestrial greatness is more than an aggregate of little things; and to inculcate, after the Arabian proverb, that drops added to drops constitute the ocean.

There remains yet to be considered the distribution of words into their proper classes, or that part of lexicography which is strictly critical.

The popular part of the language, which includes all words not appropriated to particular sciences, admits of many distinctions and subdivisions; as, into words of general use; words employed chiefly in poetry; words obsolete; words which are admitted only by particular writers, yet not in themselves improper; words used only in burlesque writing; and words impure and barbarous.

Words of general use will be known by having no sign of particularity, and their various senses will be supported by authorities of all ages.

The words appropriated to poetry will be distinguished by some mark prefixed, or will be known by having no authorities but those of poets.

Of antiquated or obsolete words, none will be inserted, but such as are to be found in authors, who wrote since the accession of Elizabeth, from which we date the golden age of our language; and of these many might be omitted, but that the reader may require, with an appearance of reason, that no difficulty should be left unresolved in books which he finds himself invited to read, as confessed and established models of style. These will be likewise pointed out by some note of exclusion, but not of disgrace.

The words which are found only in particular books, will be known by the single name of him that has used them; but such will be omitted, unless either their propriety, elegance or force, or the reputation of their authors, affords some extraordinary reason for their reception.

Words used in burlesque and familiar compositions, will be likewise mentioned with their proper authorities; such as *dudgeon*, from Butler, and *leasing*, from Prior; and will be diligently characterised by marks of distinction.

Barbarous, or impure, words and expressions, may be branded with some note of infamy, as they are carefully to be eradicated wherever they are found; and they occur too frequently, even in the best writers: as in Pope,

> —— *in* endless error *hurl'd*.
> *'Tis these* that early taint the female soul.

In Addison:

> Attend to what a *lesser* muse indites.

And in Dryden:

> A dreadful quiet felt, and *worser* far
> Than arms.————

If this part of the work can be well performed, it will be equivalent to the proposal made by Boileau to the academicians, that they should review all their polite writers, and correct such impurities as might be found in them, that their authority might not contribute, at any distant time, to the depravation of the language.

With regard to questions of purity or propriety, I was once in doubt whether I should not attribute too much to myself, in attempting to decide them, and whether my province was to extend beyond the proposition of the question, and the display of the suffrages on each side; but I have been since determined, by your Lordship's opinion, to interpose my own judgment, and shall, therefore, endeavour to support what appears to me most consonant to grammar and reason. Ausonius thought that modesty forbad him to plead inability for a task to which Cæsar had judged him equal:

> Cur me posse negem posse quod ille putat?

And I may hope, my Lord, that since you, whose authority in our language is so generally acknowledged, have commissioned me to declare my own opinion, I shall be considered as exercising a kind of vicarious jurisdiction, and that the power which might have been denied to my own claim, will be readily allowed me as the delegate of your Lordship.

In citing authorities, on which the credit of every part of

this work must depend, it will be proper to observe some obvious rules; such as of preferring writers of the first reputation to those of an inferiour rank; of noting the quotations with accuracy; and of selecting, when it can be conveniently done, such sentences, as, besides their immediate use, may give pleasure or instruction, by conveying some elegance of language, or some precept of prudence or piety.

It has been asked, on some occasions, who shall judge the judges? And since, with regard to this design, a question may arise by what authority the authorities are selected, it is necessary to obviate it, by declaring that many of the writers whose testimonies will be alleged, were selected by Mr. Pope; of whom I may be justified in affirming, that were he still alive, solicitous as he was for the success of this work, he would not be displeased that I have undertaken it.

It will be proper that the quotations be ranged according to the ages of their authors; and it will afford an agreeable amusement, if to the words and phrases which are not of our own growth, the name of the writer who first introduced them can be affixed; and if, to words which are now antiquated, the authority be subjoined of him who last admitted them. Thus, for *scathe* and *buxom*, now obsolete, Milton may be cited:

> ——— The mountain oak
> Stands *scath'd* to heaven.———
> ———He with broad sails
> Winnow'd the *buxom* air.———

By this method every word will have its history, and the reader will be informed of the gradual changes of the language, and have before his eyes the rise of some words, and the fall of others. But observations so minute and accurate are to be desired, rather than expected; and if use be carefully supplied, curiosity must sometimes bear its disappointments.

This, my Lord, is my idea of an English dictionary; a dictionary by which the pronunciation of our language

may be fixed, and its attainment facilitated; by which its purity may be preserved, its use ascertained, and its duration lengthened. And though, perhaps, to correct the language of nations by books of grammar, and amend their manners by discourses of morality, may be tasks equally difficult, yet, as it is unavoidable to wish, it is natural likewise to hope, that your Lordship's patronage may not be wholly lost; that it may contribute to the preservation of ancient, and the improvement of modern writers; that it may promote the reformation of those translators, who, for want of understanding the characteristical difference of tongues, have formed a chaotick dialect of heterogeneous phrases; and awaken to the care of purer diction some men of genius, whose attention to argument makes them negligent of style, or whose rapid imagination, like the Peruvian torrents, when it brings down gold, mingles it with sand.

When I survey the Plan which I have laid before you, I cannot, my Lord, but confess, that I am frighted at its extent, and, like the soldiers of Cæsar, look on Britain as a new world, which it is almost madness to invade. But I hope, that though I should not complete the conquest, I shall, at least, discover the coast, civilize part of the inhabitants, and make it easy for some other adventurer to proceed further, to reduce them wholly to subjection, and settle them under laws.

We are taught by the great Roman orator, that every man should propose to himself the highest degree of excellence, but that he may stop with honour at the second or third: though, therefore, my performance should fall below the excellence of other dictionaries, I may obtain, at least, the praise of having endeavoured well; nor shall I think it any reproach to my diligence, that I have retired without a triumph, from a contest with united academies, and long successions of learned compilers. I cannot hope, in the warmest moments, to preserve so much caution through so long a work, as not often to sink into negligence, or to obtain so much knowledge of all its parts,

as not frequently to fail by ignorance. I expect that sometimes the desire of accuracy will urge me to superfluities, and sometimes the fear of prolixity betray me to omissions; that in the extent of such variety, I shall be often bewildered, and, in the mazes of such intricacy, be frequently entangled; that in one part refinement will be subtilized beyond exactness, and evidence dilated in another beyond perspicuity. Yet I do not despair of approbation from those who, knowing the uncertainty of conjecture, the scantiness of knowledge, the fallibility of memory, and the unsteadiness of attention, can compare the causes of errour with the means of avoiding it, and the extent of art with the capacity of man: and whatever be the event of my endeavours, I shall not easily regret an attempt, which has procured me the honour of appearing thus publickly,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's most obedient,

and most humble servant,

Sam. Johnson.[c]

[c] Written in the year 1747.

PREFACE

TO THE

ENGLISH DICTIONARY.

It is the fate of those, who toil at the lower employments of life, to be rather driven by the fear of evil, than attracted by the prospect of good; to be exposed to censure, without hope of praise; to be disgraced by miscarriage, or punished for neglect, where success would have been without applause, and diligence without reward.

Among these unhappy mortals is the writer of dictionaries; whom mankind have considered, not as the pupil, but the slave of science, the pioneer of literature, doomed only to remove rubbish and clear obstructions from the paths, through which Learning and Genius press forward to conquest and glory, without bestowing a smile on the humble drudge that facilitates their progress. Every other author may aspire to praise; the lexicographer can only hope to escape reproach, and even this negative recompense has been yet granted to very few.

I have, notwithstanding this discouragement, attempted a Dictionary of the English language, which, while it was employed in the cultivation of every species of literature, has itself been hitherto neglected; suffered to spread, under the direction of chance, into wild exuberance; resigned to the tyranny of time and fashion; and exposed to the corruptions of ignorance, and caprices of innovation.

When I took the first survey of my undertaking, I found our speech copious without order, and energetick without

rules: wherever I turned my view, there was perplexity to be disentangled, and confusion to be regulated; choice was to be made out of boundless variety, without any established principle of selection; adulterations were to be detected, without a settled test of purity; and modes of expression to be rejected or received, without the suffrages of any writers of classical reputation or acknowledged authority.

Having, therefore, no assistance but from general grammar, I applied myself to the perusal of our writers; and, noting whatever might be of use to ascertain or illustrate any word or phrase, accumulated in time the materials of a dictionary, which, by degrees, I reduced to method, establishing to myself, in the progress of the work, such rules as experience and analogy suggested to me: experience, which practice and observation were continually increasing; and analogy, which, though in some words obscure, was evident in others.

In adjusting the ORTHOGRAPHY, which has been to this time unsettled and fortuitous, I found it necessary to distinguish those irregularities that are inherent in our tongue, and, perhaps, coeval with it, from others, which the ignorance or negligence of later writers has produced. Every language has its anomalies, which, though inconvenient, and in themselves once unnecessary, must be tolerated among the imperfections of human things; and which require only to be registered, that they may not be increased, and ascertained, that they may not be confounded: but every language has likewise its improprieties and absurdities, which it is the duty of the lexicographer to correct or proscribe.

As language was at its beginning merely oral, all words of necessary or common use were spoken, before they were written; and while they were unfixed by any visible signs, must have been spoken with great diversity, as we now observe those, who cannot read, catch sounds imperfectly, and utter them negligently. When this wild and barbarous jargon was first reduced to an alphabet, every penman

endeavoured to express, as he could, the sounds which he was accustomed to pronounce or to receive, and vitiated in writing such words as were already vitiated in speech. The powers of the letters, when they were applied to a new language, must have been vague and unsettled, and, therefore, different hands would exhibit the same sound by different combinations.

From this uncertain pronunciation arise, in a great part, the various dialects of the same country, which will always be observed to grow fewer and less different, as books are multiplied; and from this arbitrary representation of sounds by letters proceeds that diversity of spelling, observable in the Saxon remains, and, I suppose, in the first books of every nation, which perplexes or destroys analogy, and produces anomalous formations, that being once incorporated, can never be afterwards dismissed or reformed.

Of this kind are the derivatives *length* from *long*, *strength* from *strong*, *darling* from *dear*, *breadth* from *broad*, from *dry*, *drought*, and from *high*, *height*, which Milton, in zeal for analogy, writes *highth*: "Quid te exempta juvat spinis de pluribus una?" to change all would be too much, and to change one is nothing.

This uncertainty is most frequent in the vowels, which are so capriciously pronounced, and so differently modified, by accident or affectation, not only in every province, but in every mouth, that to them, as is well known to etymologists, little regard is to be shown in the deduction of one language from another.

Such defects are not errours in orthography, but spots of barbarity impressed so deep in the English language, that criticism can never wash them away: these, therefore, must be permitted to remain untouched: but many words have likewise been altered by accident, or depraved by ignorance, as the pronunciation of the vulgar has been weakly followed; and some still continue to be variously written, as authors differ in their care or skill: of these it was proper to inquire the true orthography, which I

have always considered as depending on their derivation, and have, therefore, referred them to their original languages: thus I write *enchant, enchantment, enchanter*, after the French, and *incantation* after the Latin; thus *entire* is chosen rather than *intire*, because it passed to us not from the Latin *integer*, but from the French *entier*.

Of many words it is difficult to say, whether they were immediately received from the Latin or the French, since at the time when we had dominions in France, we had Latin service in our churches. It is, however, my opinion, that the French generally supplied us; for we have few Latin words, among the terms of domestick use, which are not French; but many French, which are very remote from Latin.

Even in words of which the derivation is apparent, I have been often obliged to sacrifice uniformity to custom; thus I write, in compliance with a numberless majority, *convey* and *inveigh, deceit* and *receipt, fancy* and *phantom*; sometimes the derivative varies from the primitive, as *explain* and *explanation, repeat* and *repetition*.

Some combinations of letters, having the same power, are used indifferently without any discoverable reason of choice, as in *choak, choke; soap, sope; fewel, fuel*, and many others; which I have sometimes inserted twice, that those, who search for them under either form, may not search in vain.

In examining the orthography of any doubtful word, the mode of spelling by which it is inserted in the series of the Dictionary, is to be considered as that to which I give, perhaps, not often rashly, the preference. I have left, in the examples, to every author his own practice unmolested, that the reader may balance suffrages, and judge between us: but this question is not always to be determined by reputed or by real learning: some men, intent upon greater things, have thought little on sounds and derivations; some, knowing in the ancient tongues, have neglected those in which our words are commonly to be sought. Thus Hammond writes *fecibleness* for *feasibleness*,

because, I suppose, he imagined it derived immediately from the Latin; and some words, such as *dependant, dependent, dependance, dependence,* vary their final syllable, as one or another language is present to the writer.

In this part of the work, where caprice has long wantoned without control, and vanity sought praise by petty reformation, I have endeavoured to proceed with a scholar's reverence for antiquity, and a grammarian's regard to the genius of our tongue. I have attempted few alterations, and among those few, perhaps, the greater part is from the modern to the ancient practice; and, I hope, I may be allowed to recommend to those, whose thoughts have been, perhaps, employed too anxiously on verbal singularities, not to disturb, upon narrow views, or for minute propriety, the orthography of their fathers. It has been asserted, that for the law to be *known,* is of more importance than to be *right.* "Change," says Hooker, "is not made without inconvenience, even from worse to better." There is in constancy and stability a general and lasting advantage, which will always overbalance the slow improvements of gradual correction. Much less ought our written language to comply with the corruptions of oral utterance, or copy that which every variation of time or place makes different from itself, and imitate those changes which will again be changed, while imitation is employed in observing them.

This recommendation of steadiness and uniformity does not proceed from an opinion, that particular combinations of letters have much influence on human happiness; or that truth may not be successfully taught by modes of spelling fanciful and erroneous: I am not yet so lost in lexicography, as to forget that *words are the daughters of earth, and that things are the sons of heaven.* Language is only the instrument of science, and words are but the signs of ideas: I wish, however, that the instrument might be less apt to decay, and that signs might be permanent, like the things which they denote.

In settling the orthography, I have not wholly neglected

the pronunciation, which I have directed, by printing an accent upon the acute or elevated syllable. It will sometimes be found, that the accent is placed, by the author quoted, on a different syllable from that marked in the alphabetical series; it is then to be understood, that custom has varied, or that the author has, in my opinion, pronounced wrong. Short directions are sometimes given, where the sound of letters is irregular; and if they are sometimes omitted, defect in such minute observations will be more easily excused, than superfluity.

In the investigation both of the orthography and signification of words, their ETYMOLOGY was necessarily to be considered, and they were, therefore, to be divided into primitives and derivatives. A primitive word is that which can be traced no further to any English root; thus *circumspect, circumvent, circumstance, delude, concave,* and *complicate,* though compounds in the Latin, are to us primitives. Derivatives are all those that can be referred to any word in English of greater simplicity.

The derivatives I have referred to their primitives, with an accuracy sometimes needless; for who does not see that *remoteness* comes from *remote, lovely* from *love, concavity* from *concave,* and *demonstrative* from *demonstrate?* But this grammatical exuberance the scheme of my work did not allow me to repress. It is of great importance, in examining the general fabrick of a language, to trace one word from another, by noting the usual modes of derivation and inflection; and uniformity must be preserved in systematical works, though sometimes at the expense of particular propriety.

Among other derivatives, I have been careful to insert and elucidate the anomalous plurals of nouns and preterites of verbs, which in the Teutonick dialects are very frequent, and, though familiar to those who have always used them, interrupt and embarrass the learners of our language.

The two languages from which our primitives have been derived are the Roman and Teutonick: under the Roman I comprehend the French and provincial tongues; and

under the Teutonick range the Saxon, German, and all their kindred dialects. Most of our polysyllables are Roman, and our words of one syllable are very often Teutonick.

In assigning the Roman original, it has, perhaps, sometimes happened that I have mentioned only the Latin, when the word was borrowed from the French; and, considering myself as employed only in the illustration of my own language, I have not been very careful to observe whether the Latin word be pure or barbarous, or the French elegant or obsolete.

For the Teutonick etymologies, I am commonly indebted to Junius and Skinner, the only names which I have forborne to quote when I copied their books; not that I might appropriate their labours or usurp their honours, but that I might spare a perpetual repetition by one general acknowledgment. Of these, whom I ought not to mention but with the reverence due to instructers and benefactors, Junius appears to have excelled in extent of learning, and Skinner in rectitude of understanding. Junius was accurately skilled in all the northern languages; Skinner probably examined the ancient and remoter dialects only by occasional inspection into dictionaries; but the learning of Junius is often of no other use than to show him a track, by which he may deviate from his purpose, to which Skinner always presses forward by the shortest way. Skinner is often ignorant, but never ridiculous: Junius is always full of knowledge, but his variety distracts his judgment, and his learning is very frequently disgraced by his absurdities.

The votaries of the northern muses will not, perhaps, easily restrain their indignation, when they find the name of Junius thus degraded by a disadvantageous comparison; but whatever reverence is due to his diligence, or his attainments, it can be no criminal degree of censoriousness to charge that etymologist with want of judgment, who can seriously derive *dream* from *drama*, because *life is a*

drama, and a drama is a dream; and who declares with a tone of defiance, that no man can fail to derive *moan* from μόνος, (*monos,*) *single* or *solitary*, who considers that grief naturally loves to be alone[d].

Our knowledge of the northern literature is so scanty, that of words undoubtedly Teutonick, the original is not always to be found in any ancient language; and I have, therefore, inserted Dutch or German substitutes, which I consider not as radical, but parallel, not as the parents, but sisters of the English.

The words, which are represented as thus related by descent or cognation, do not always agree in sense; for it is incident to words, as to their authors, to degenerate from their ancestors, and to change their manners when they change their country. It is sufficient, in etymological

[d] That I may not appear to have spoken too irreverently of Junius, I have here subjoined a few specimens of his etymological extravagance.

Banish, *religare, ex banno vel territorio exigere, in exilium agere.* Gal. *bannir.* It. *bandire, bandeggiare.* H. *bandir.* B. *bannen.* Ævi medii scriptores bannire dicebant. V. Spelm. in Bannum & in Banleuga. Quoniam vero regionum urbiumq; limites arduis plerumq; montibus, altis fluminibus, longis deniq; flexuosisq; angustissimarum viarum anfractibus includebantur, fieri potest id genus limites *ban* dici ab eo quod Βαννάται et Βαννάτροι Tarentinis olim, sicuti tradit Hesychius, vocabantur αἱ λοξοὶ καὶ μὴ ἰθυτενεῖς ὁδοὶ, "obliquæ ac minime in rectum tendentes viæ." Ac fortasse quoque huc facit quod Βανοὺς, eodem Hesychio teste, dicebant ὄρη στραγγύλη, montes arduos.

Empty, emtie, *vacuus, inanis.* A. S. Æmtiȝ. Nescio an sint ab ἐμέω vel ἐμετιάω. Vomo, evomo, vomitu evacuo. Videtur interim etymologiam hanc non obscure firmare codex Rush. Mat. xii. 22. ubi antique scriptum invenimus ȝemoeteb hit emetiȝ. "Invenit eam vacantem."

Hill, *mons, collis.* A. S. hyll. Quod videri potest abscissum ex κολώνη vel κολωνός. Collis, tumulus, locus in plano editior. Hom. Il. B. v. 811. ἔστι δέ τις προπάροιθε πόλεως αἰπεῖα κολώνη. Ubi authori brevium scholiorum κολώνη exp. τόπος εἰς ὕψος ἀνήκων· γεώλοφος ἐξοχή.

Nap, *to take a nap. Dormire, condormiscere.* Cym. *heppian.* A. S. hnæppan. Quod postremum videri potest desumptum ex κνέφας, obscuritas, tenebræ: nihil enim æque solet conciliare somnum, quam caliginosa prǒfundæ noctis obscuritas.

Stammerer, Balbus, blæsus. Goth. STAMMS. A. S. ȝtamep, ȝtamup. D. *stam.* B. *stameler.* Su. *stamma.* Isl. *stamr.* Sunt a στωμυλεῖν vel στωμύλλειν, nimia loquacitate alios offendere; quod impedite loquentes libentissime garrire soleant; vel quod aliis nimii semper videantur, etiam parcissime loquentes.

inquiries, if the senses of kindred words be found such as may easily pass into each other, or such as may both be referred to one general idea.

The etymology, so far as it is yet known, was easily found in the volumes, where it is particularly and professedly delivered; and, by proper attention to the rules of derivation, the orthography was soon adjusted. But to COLLECT the WORDS of our language was a task of greater difficulty: the deficiency of dictionaries was immediately apparent; and when they were exhausted, what was yet wanting must be sought by fortuitous and unguided excursions into books, and gleaned as industry should find, or chance should offer it, in the boundless chaos of a living speech. My search, however, has been either skilful or lucky; for I have much augmented the vocabulary.

As my design was a dictionary, common or appellative, I have omitted all words which have relation to proper names; such as *Arian, Socinian, Calvinist, Benedictine, Mahometan;* but have retained those of a more general nature, as *Heathen, Pagan.*

Of the terms of art I have received such as could be found either in books of science or technical dictionaries; and have often inserted, from philosophical writers, words which are supported, perhaps, only by a single authority, and which, being not admitted into general use, stand yet as candidates or probationers, and must depend for their adoption on the suffrage of futurity.

The words which our authors have introduced by their knowledge of foreign languages, or ignorance of their own, by vanity or wantonness, by compliance with fashion or lust of innovation, I have registered as they occurred, though commonly only to censure them, and warn others against the folly of naturalizing useless foreigners to the injury of the natives.

I have not rejected any by design, merely because they were unnecessary or exuberant; but have received those which by different writers have been differently formed, as *viscid,* and *viscidity, viscous,* and *viscosity.*

Compounded or double words I have seldom noted, except when they obtain a signification different from that which the components have in their simple state. Thus *highwayman*, *woodman*, and *horsecourser*, require an explanation; but of *thieflike* or *coachdriver*, no notice was needed, because the primitives contain the meaning of the compounds.

Words arbitrarily formed by a constant and settled analogy, like diminutive adjectives in *ish*, as *greenish*, *bluish*; adverbs in *ly*, as *dully*, *openly*; substantives in *ness*, as *vileness*, *faultiness*; were less diligently sought, and sometimes have been omitted, when I had no authority that invited me to insert them; not that they are not genuine and regular offsprings of English roots, but, because their relation to the primitive being always the same, their significations cannot be mistaken.

The verbal nouns in *ing*, such as the *keeping* of the *castle*, the *leading* of the *army*, are always neglected, or placed only to illustrate the sense of the verb, except when they signify things as well as actions, and have, therefore, a plural number, as *dwelling*, *living*; or have an absolute and abstract signification, as *colouring*, *painting*, *learning*.

The participles are likewise omitted, unless, by signifying rather habit or quality than action, they take the nature of adjectives; as a *thinking* man, a man of prudence; a *pacing* horse, a horse that can pace: these I have ventured to call *participial adjectives*. But neither are these always inserted, because they are commonly to be understood without any danger of mistake, by consulting the verb.

Obsolete words are admitted, when they are found in authors not obsolete, or when they have any force or beauty that may deserve revival.

As composition is one of the chief characteristicks of a language, I have endeavoured to make some reparation for the universal negligence of my predecessors, by inserting great numbers of compounded words, as may be found under *after*, *fore*, *new*, *night*, *fair*, and many more.

These, numerous as they are, might be multiplied, but that use and curiosity are here satisfied, and the frame of our language and modes of our combination amply discovered.

Of some forms of composition, such as that by which *re* is prefixed to note *repetition*, and *un* to signify *contrariety* or *privation*, all the examples cannot be accumulated, because the use of these particles, if not wholly arbitrary, is so little limited, that they are hourly affixed to new words, as occasion requires, or is imagined to require them.

There is another kind of composition more frequent in our language than, perhaps, in any other, from which arises to foreigners the greatest difficulty. We modify the signification of many verbs by a particle subjoined; as to *come off*, to escape by a fetch; to *fall on*, to attack; to *fall off*, to apostatize; to *break off*, to stop abruptly; to *bear out*, to justify; to *fall in*, to comply; to *give over*, to cease; to *set off*, to embellish; to *set in*, to begin a continual tenour; to *set out*, to begin a course or journey; to *take off*, to copy; with innumerable expressions of the same kind, of which some appear wildly irregular, being so far distant from the sense of the simple words, that no sagacity will be able to trace the steps by which they arrived at the present use. These I have noted with great care; and though I cannot flatter myself that the collection is complete, I believe I have so far assisted the students of our language, that this kind of phraseology will be no longer insuperable; and the combinations of verbs and particles, by chance omitted, will be easily explained by comparison with those that may be found.

Many words yet stand supported only by the name of Bailey, Ainsworth, Philips, or the contracted *Dict.* for *Dictionaries* subjoined; of these I am not always certain, that they are read in any book but the works of lexicographers. Of such I have omitted many, because I had never read them; and many I have inserted, because they may, perhaps, exist, though they have escaped my notice: they are, however, to be yet considered as resting only upon the credit of former dictionaries. Others, which I con-

sidered as useful, or know to be proper; though I could not at present support them by authorities, I have suffered to stand upon my own attestation, claiming the same privilege with my predecessors, of being sometimes credited without proof.

The words, thus selected and disposed, are grammatically considered; they are referred to the different parts of speech; traced, when they are irregularly inflected, through their various terminations; and illustrated by observations, not, indeed, of great or striking importance, separately considered, but necessary to the elucidation of our language, and hitherto neglected or forgotten by English grammarians.

That part of my work on which I expect malignity most frequently to fasten is, the *Explanation*; in which I cannot hope to satisfy those, who are, perhaps, not inclined to be pleased, since I have not always been able to satisfy myself. To interpret a language by itself is very difficult; many words cannot be explained by synonymes, because the idea signified by them has not more than one appellation; nor by paraphrase, because simple ideas cannot be described. When the nature of things is unknown, or the notion unsettled and indefinite, and various in various minds, the words by which such notions are conveyed, or such things denoted, will be ambiguous and perplexed. And such is the fate of hapless lexicography, that not only darkness, but light, impedes and distresses it; things may be not only too little, but too much known, to be happily illustrated. To explain, requires the use of terms less abstruse than that which is to be explained, and such terms cannot always be found; for as nothing can be proved but by supposing something intuitively known, and evident without proof, so nothing can be defined but by the use of words too plain to admit a definition.

Other words there are, of which the sense is too subtile and evanescent to be fixed in a paraphrase; such are all those which are by the grammarians termed expletives, and, in dead languages, are suffered to pass for empty

sounds, of no other use than to fill a verse, or to modulate a period, but which are easily perceived in living tongues to have power and emphasis, though it be sometimes such as no other form of expression can convey.

My labour has likewise been much increased by a class of verbs too frequent in the English language, of which the signification is so loose and general, the use so vague and indeterminate, and the senses detorted so widely from the first idea, that it is hard to trace them through the maze of variation, to catch them on the brink of utter inanity, to circumscribe them by any limitations, or interpret them by any words of distinct and settled meaning; such are *bear, break, come, cast, fall, get, give, do, put, set, go, run, make, take, turn, throw.* If of these the whole power is not accurately delivered, it must be remembered, that while our language is yet living, and variable by the caprice of every one that speaks it, these words are hourly shifting their relations, and can no more be ascertained in a dictionary, than a grove, in the agitation of a storm, can be accurately delineated from its picture in the water.

The particles are among all nations applied with so great latitude, that they are not easily reducible under any regular scheme of explication: this difficulty is not less, nor, perhaps, greater, in English, than in other languages. I have laboured them with diligence, I hope with success; such at least as can be expected in a task, which no man, however learned or sagacious, has yet been able to perform.

Some words there are which I cannot explain, because I do not understand them; these might have been omitted very often with little inconvenience, but I would not so far indulge my vanity, as to decline this confession; for when Tully owns himself ignorant whether *lessus*, in the twelve tables, means a *funeral song*, or *mourning garment;* and Aristotle doubts whether οὐρεὺς in the Iliad, signifies a *mule*, or *muleteer*, I may surely, without shame, leave some obscurities to happier industry, or future information.

The rigour of interpretative lexicography requires that *the explanation*, and *the word explained, should be always*

reciprocal; this I have always endeavoured, but could not always attain. Words are seldom exactly synonymous; a new term was not introduced, but because the former was thought inadequate: names, therefore, have often many ideas, but few ideas have many names. It was then necessary to use the proximate word, for the deficiency of single terms can very seldom be supplied by circumlocution; nor is the inconvenience great of such mutilated interpretations, because the sense may easily be collected entire from the examples.

In every word of extensive use, it was requisite to mark the progress of its meaning, and show by what gradations of intermediate sense it has passed from its primitive to its remote and accidental signification; so that every foregoing explanation should tend to that which follows, and the series be regularly concatenated from the first notion to the last.

This is specious, but not always practicable; kindred senses may be so interwoven, that the perplexity cannot be disentangled, nor any reason be assigned why one should be ranged before the other. When the radical idea branches out into parallel ramifications, how can a consecutive series be formed of senses in their nature collateral? The shades of meaning sometimes pass imperceptibly into each other, so that though on one side they apparently differ, yet it is impossible to mark the point of contact. Ideas of the same race, though not exactly alike, are sometimes so little different, that no words can express the dissimilitude, though the mind easily perceives it, when they are exhibited together; and sometimes there is such a confusion of acceptations, that discernment is wearied and distinction puzzled, and perseverance herself hurries to an end, by crowding together what she cannot separate.

These complaints of difficulty will, by those that have never considered words beyond their popular use, be thought only the jargon of a man willing to magnify his labours, and procure veneration to his studies by involution and obscurity. But every art is obscure to those that have

not learned it: this uncertainty of terms, and commixture of ideas, is well known to those who have joined philosophy with grammar; and, if I have not expressed them very clearly, it must be remembered that I am speaking of that which words are insufficient to explain.

The original sense of words is often driven out of use by their metaphorical acceptations, yet must be inserted for the sake of a regular origination. Thus I know not whether *ardour* is used for *material heat*, or whether *flagrant*, in English, ever signifies the same with *burning*; yet such are the primitive ideas of these words, which are, therefore, set first, though without examples, that the figurative senses may be commodiously deduced.

Such is the exuberance of signification which many words have obtained, that it was scarcely possible to collect all their senses; sometimes the meaning of derivatives must be sought in the mother term, and sometimes deficient explanations of the primitive may be supplied in the train of derivation. In any case of doubt or difficulty, it will be always proper to examine all the words of the same race; for some words are slightly passed over to avoid repetition; some admitted easier and clearer explanation than others; and all will be better understood, as they are considered in greater variety of structures and relations.

All the interpretations of words are not written with the same skill, or the same happiness: things, equally easy in themselves, are not all equally easy to any single mind. Every writer of a long work commits errours, where there appears neither ambiguity to mislead, nor obscurity to confound him: and, in a search like this, many felicities of expression will be casually overlooked, many convenient parallels will be forgotten, and many particulars will admit improvement from a mind utterly unequal to the whole performance.

But many seeming faults are to be imputed rather to the nature of the undertaking, than the negligence of the performer. Thus some explanations are unavoidably re-

ciprocal or circular, as *hind, the female of the stag; stag, the male of the hind:* sometimes easier words are changed into harder, as *burial* into *sepulture*, or *interment*, *drier* into *desiccative*, *dryness* into *siccity* or *aridity*, *fit* into *paroxysm*; for the easiest word, whatever it be, can never be translated into one more easy. But easiness and difficulty are merely relative; and, if the present prevalence of our language should invite foreigners to this Dictionary, many will be assisted by those words, which now seem only to increase or produce obscurity. For this reason I have endeavoured frequently to join a Teutonick and Roman interpretation, as to *cheer*, to *gladden* or *exhilarate*, that every learner of English may be assisted by his own tongue.

The solution of all difficulties, and the supply of all defects, must be sought in the examples, subjoined to the various senses of each word, and ranged according to the time of their authors.

When I first collected these authorities, I was desirous that every quotation should be useful to some other end than the illustration of a word; I, therefore, extracted from philosophers principles of science; from historians remarkable facts; from chymists complete processes; from divines striking exhortations; and from poets beautiful descriptions. Such is design, while it is yet at a distance from execution. When the time called upon me to range this accumulation of elegance and wisdom into an alphabetical series, I soon discovered that the bulk of my volumes would fright away the student, and was forced to depart from my scheme of including all that was pleasing or useful in English literature, and reduce my transcripts very often to clusters of words, in which scarcely any meaning is retained: thus to the weariness of copying, I was condemned to add the vexation of expunging. Some passages I have yet spared, which may relieve the labour of verbal searches, and intersperse with verdure and flowers the dusty deserts of barren philology.

The examples, thus mutilated, are no longer to be con-

sidered as conveying the sentiments or doctrine of their authors; the word, for the sake of which they are inserted, with all its appendant clauses, has been carefully preserved; but it may sometimes happen, by hasty detruncation, that the general tendency of the sentence may be changed: the divine may desert his tenets, or the philosopher his system.

Some of the examples have been taken from writers who were never mentioned as masters of elegance, or models of style; but words must be sought where they are used; and in what pages, eminent for purity, can terms of manufacture or agriculture be found? Many quotations serve no other purpose, than that of proving the bare existence of words, and are, therefore, selected with less scrupulousness than those which are to teach their structures and relations.

My purpose was to admit no testimony of living authors, that I might not be misled by partiality, and that none of my contemporaries might have reason to complain; nor have I departed from this resolution, but when some performance of uncommon excellence excited my veneration, when my memory supplied me from late books with an example that was wanting, or when my heart, in the tenderness of friendship, solicited admission for a favourite name.

So far have I been from any care to grace my pages with modern decorations, that I have studiously endeavoured to collect examples and authorities from the writers before the Restoration, whose works I regard as *the wells of English undefiled*, as the pure sources of genuine diction. Our language, for almost a century, has, by the concurrence of many causes, been gradually departing from its original Teutonick character, and deviating towards a Gallick structure and phraseology[e], from which it ought to be our endeavour to recall it, by making our ancient volumes the ground-work of style, admitting among the additions

[e] The structure of Hume's sentences is French. For Johnson's opinion of it, see Boswell, i. 420. Edit. 1816.

of later times only such as may supply real deficiencies, such as are readily adopted by the genius of our tongue, and incorporate easily with our native idioms.

But as every language has a time of rudeness antecedent to perfection, as well as of false refinement and declension, I have been cautious lest my zeal for antiquity might drive me into times too remote, and crowd my book with words now no longer understood. I have fixed Sidney's work for the boundary, beyond which I make few excursions. From the authors which rose in the time of Elizabeth, a speech might be formed adequate to all the purposes of use and elegance. If the language of theology were extracted from Hooker and the translation of the Bible; the terms of natural knowledge from Bacon; the phrases of policy, war, and navigation from Raleigh; the dialect of poetry and fiction from Spenser and Sidney; and the diction of common life from Shakespeare, few ideas would be lost to mankind, for want of English words, in which they might be expressed.

It is not sufficient that a word is found, unless it be so combined as that its meaning is apparently determined by the tract and tenour of the sentence; such passages I have, therefore, chosen, and when it happened that any author gave a definition of a term, or such an explanation as is equivalent to a definition, I have placed his authority as a supplement to my own, without regard to the chronological order, that is otherwise observed.

Some words, indeed, stand unsupported by any authority, but they are commonly derivative nouns or adverbs, formed from their primitives by regular and constant analogy, or names of things seldom occurring in books, or words of which I have reason to doubt the existence.

There is more danger of censure from the multiplicity than paucity of examples; authorities will sometimes seem to have been accumulated without necessity or use, and, perhaps, some will be found, which might, without loss, have been omitted. But a work of this kind is not hastily

to be charged with superfluities: those quotations, which to careless or unskilful perusers appear only to repeat the same sense, will often exhibit, to a more accurate examiner, diversities of significations, or, at least, afford different shades of the same meaning: one will show the word applied to persons, another to things; one will express an ill, another a good, and a third a neutral sense; one will prove the expression genuine from an ancient author; another will show it elegant from a modern: a doubtful authority is corroborated by another of more credit; an ambiguous sentence is ascertained by a passage clear and determinate: the word, how often soever repeated, appears with new associates, and in different combinations, and every quotation contributes something to the stability or enlargement of the language.

When words are used equivocally, I receive them in either sense; when they are metaphorical, I adopt them in their primitive acceptation.

I have sometimes, though rarely, yielded to the temptation of exhibiting a genealogy of sentiments, by showing how one author copied the thoughts and diction of another: such quotations are, indeed, little more than repetitions, which might justly be censured, did they not gratify the mind, by affording a kind of intellectual history.

The various syntactical structures occurring in the examples have been carefully noted; the license or negligence, with which many words have been hitherto used, has made our style capricious and indeterminate; when the different combinations of the same word are exhibited together, the preference is readily given to propriety, and I have often endeavoured to direct the choice.

Thus I have laboured, by settling the orthography, displaying the analogy, regulating the structures, and ascertaining the signification of English words, to perform all the parts of a faithful lexicographer: but I have not always executed my own scheme, or satisfied my own expectations. The work, whatever proofs of diligence and attention it may exhibit, is yet capable of many im-

provements: the orthography which I recommend is still controvertible; the etymology which I adopt is uncertain, and, perhaps, frequently erroneous; the explanations are sometimes too much contracted, and sometimes too much diffused; the significations are distinguished rather with subtilty than skill, and the attention is harassed with unnecessary minuteness.

The examples are too often injudiciously truncated, and perhaps sometimes, I hope very rarely, alleged in a mistaken sense; for in making this collection I trusted more to memory, than, in a state of disquiet and embarrassment, memory can contain, and purposed to supply, at the review, what was left incomplete in the first transcription.

Many terms, appropriated to particular occupations, though necessary and significant, are undoubtedly omitted; and, of the words most studiously considered and exemplified, many senses have escaped observation.

Yet these failures, however frequent, may admit extenuation and apology. To have attempted much is always laudable, even when the enterprise is above the strength that undertakes it: To rest below his own aim is incident to every one whose fancy is active, and whose views are comprehensive; nor is any man satisfied with himself, because he has done much, but because he can conceive little. When first I engaged in this work, I resolved to leave neither words nor things unexamined, and pleased myself with a prospect of the hours which I should revel away in feasts of literature, with the obscure recesses of northern learning which I should enter and ransack, the treasures with which I expected every search into those neglected mines to reward my labour, and the triumph with which I should display my acquisitions to mankind. When I had thus inquired into the original of words, I resolved to show likewise my attention to things; to pierce deep into every science, to inquire the nature of every substance of which I inserted the name, to limit every idea by a definition strictly logical, and exhibit every production of art or nature in an accurate descrip-

tion, that my book might be in place of all other dictionaries, whether appellative or technical. But these were the dreams of a poet, doomed at last to wake a lexicographer. I soon found that it is too late to look for instruments, when the work calls for execution, and that whatever abilities I had brought to my task, with those I must finally perform it. To deliberate whenever I doubted, to inquire whenever I was ignorant, would have protracted the undertaking without end, and, perhaps, without much improvement; for I did not find by my first experiments, that what I had not of my own was easily to be obtained: I saw that one inquiry only gave occasion to another, that book referred to book, that to search was not always to find, and to find was not always to be informed; and that thus to pursue perfection, was, like the first inhabitants of Arcadia, to chase the sun, which, when they had reached the hill where he seemed to rest, was still beheld at the same distance from them.

I then contracted my design, determining to confide in myself, and no longer to solicit auxiliaries, which produced more incumbrance than assistance; by this I obtained at least one advantage, that I set limits to my work, which would in time be ended, though not completed.

Despondency has never so far prevailed as to depress me to negligence; some faults will at last appear to be the effects of anxious diligence and persevering activity. The nice and subtile ramifications of meaning were not easily avoided by a mind intent upon accuracy, and convinced of the necessity of disentangling combinations, and separating similitudes. Many of the distinctions which to common readers appear useless and idle, will be found real and important by men versed in the school philosophy, without which no dictionary can ever be accurately compiled, or skilfully examined.

Some senses however there are, which, though not the same, are yet so nearly allied, that they are often confounded. Most men think indistinctly, and, therefore, can-

not speak with exactness; and, consequently, some examples might be indifferently put to either signification: this uncertainty is not to be imputed to me, who do not form, but register the language; who do not teach men how they should think, but relate how they have hitherto expressed their thoughts.

The imperfect sense of some examples I lamented, but could not remedy, and hope they will be compensated by innumerable passages selected with propriety, and preserved with exactness; some shining with sparks of imagination, and some replete with treasures of wisdom.

The orthography and etymology, though imperfect, are not imperfect for want of care, but because care will not always be successful, and recollection or information come too late for use.

That many terms of art and manufacture are omitted, must be frankly acknowledged; but for this defect I may boldly allege that it was unavoidable: I could not visit caverns to learn the miner's language, nor take a voyage to perfect my skill in the dialect of navigation, nor visit the warehouses of merchants, and shops of artificers, to gain the names of wares, tools, and operations, of which no mention is found in books; what favourable accident or easy inquiry brought within my reach, has not been neglected; but it had been a hopeless labour to glean up words, by courting living information, and contesting with the sullenness of one, and the roughness of another.

To furnish the academicians *della Crusca* with words of this kind, a series of comedies called *la Fiera*, or the Fair, was professedly written by Buonarotti; but I had no such assistant, and, therefore, was content to want what they must have wanted likewise, had they not luckily been so supplied.

Nor are all words, which are not found in the vocabulary, to be lamented as omissions. Of the laborious and mercantile part of the people, the diction is in a great measure casual and mutable; many of their terms are formed for some temporary or local convenience, and though current

at certain times and places, are in others utterly unknown. This fugitive cant, which is always in a state of increase or decay, cannot be regarded as any part of the durable materials of a language, and, therefore, must be suffered to perish with other things unworthy of preservation.

Care will sometimes betray to the appearance of negligence. He that is catching opportunities which seldom occur, will suffer those to pass by unregarded, which he expects hourly to return; he that is searching for rare and remote things, will neglect those that are obvious and familiar: thus many of the most common and cursory words have been inserted with little illustration, because in gathering the authorities, I forbore to copy those which I thought likely to occur, whenever they were wanted. It is remarkable that, in reviewing my collection, I found the word SEA unexemplified.

Thus it happens, that in things difficult there is danger from ignorance, and in things easy from confidence; the mind, afraid of greatness, and disdainful of littleness, hastily withdraws herself from painful searches, and passes with scornful rapidity over tasks not adequate to her powers; sometimes too secure for caution, and again too anxious for vigorous effort; sometimes idle in a plain path, and sometimes distracted in labyrinths, and dissipated by different intentions.

A large work is difficult, because it is large, even though all its parts might singly be performed with facility; where there are many things to be done, each must be allowed its share of time and labour, in the proportion only which it bears to the whole; nor can it be expected, that the stones which form the dome of a temple, should be squared and polished like the diamond of a ring.

Of the event of this work, for which, having laboured it with so much application, I cannot but have some degree of parental fondness, it is natural to form conjectures. Those who have been persuaded to think well of my design, will require that it should fix our language, and put a stop to those alterations which time and chance have

hitherto been suffered to make in it without opposition. With this consequence I will confess that I flattered myself for a while; but now begin to fear, that I have indulged expectation which neither reason nor experience can justify. When we see men grow old and die at a certain time one after another, from century to century, we laugh at the elixir that promises to prolong life to a thousand years; and with equal justice may the lexicographer be derided, who being able to produce no example of a nation that has preserved their words and phrases from mutability, shall imagine that his dictionary can embalm his language, and secure it from corruption and decay, that it is in his power to change sublunary nature, and clear the world at once from folly, vanity and affectation.

With this hope, however, academies have been instituted, to guard the avenues of their languages, to retain fugitives, and repulse intruders; but their vigilance and activity have hitherto been vain; sounds are too volatile and subtile for legal restraints; to enchain syllables, and to lash the wind, are equally the undertakings of pride, unwilling to measure its desires by its strength. The French language has visibly changed under the inspection of the academy; the style of Amelot's translation of father Paul is observed by Le Courayer to be *un peu passé*; and no Italian will maintain, that the diction of any modern writer is not perceptibly different from that of Boccace, Machiavel, or Caro.

Total and sudden transformations of a language seldom happen; conquests and migrations are now very rare; but there are other causes of change, which, though slow in their operation, and invisible in their progress, are, perhaps, as much superiour to human resistance, as the revolutions of the sky, or intumescence of the tide. Commerce, however necessary, however lucrative, as it depraves the manners, corrupts the language; they that have frequent intercourse with strangers, to whom they endeavour to accommodate themselves, must in time learn a mingled dialect, like the jargon which serves the traf-

fickers on the Mediterranean and Indian coasts. This will not always be confined to the exchange, the warehouse, or the port, but will be communicated by degrees to other ranks of the people, and be at last incorporated with the current speech.

There are likewise internal causes equally forcible. The language most likely to continue long without alteration, would be that of a nation raised a little, and but a little, above barbarity, secluded from strangers, and totally employed in procuring the conveniencies of life; either without books, or, like some of the Mahometan countries, with very few: men thus busied and unlearned, having only such words as common use requires, would, perhaps, long continue to express the same notions by the same signs. But no such constancy can be expected in a people polished by arts, and classed by subordination, where one part of the community is sustained and accommodated by the labour of the other. Those who have much leisure to think, will always be enlarging the stock of ideas; and every increase of knowledge, whether real or fancied, will produce new words, or combinations of words. When the mind is unchained from necessity, it will range after convenience; when it is left at large in the fields of speculation, it will shift opinions; as any custom is disused, the words that expressed it must perish with it; as any opinion grows popular, it will innovate speech in the same proportion as it alters practice.

As by the cultivation of various sciences, a language is amplified, it will be more furnished with words deflected from their original sense; the geometrician will talk of a "courtier's zenith, or the eccentrick virtue of a wild hero;" and the physician of "sanguine expectations and phlegmatick delays." Copiousness of speech will give opportunities to capricious choice, by which some words will be preferred, and others degraded; vicissitudes of fashion will enforce the use of new, or extend the signification of known terms. The tropes of poetry will make hourly encroachments, and the metaphorical will become the current

sense: pronunciation will be varied by levity or ignorance, and the pen must at length comply with the tongue; illiterate writers will, at one time or other, by publick infatuation, rise into renown, who, not knowing the original import of words, will use them with colloquial licentiousness, confound distinction, and forget propriety. As politeness increases, some expressions will be considered as too gross and vulgar for the delicate, others as too formal and ceremonious for the gay and airy; new phrases are, therefore, adopted, which must, for the same reasons, be in time dismissed. Swift, in his petty treatise on the English language, allows that new words must sometimes be introduced, but proposes that none should be suffered to become obsolete. But what makes a word obsolete, more than general agreement to forbear it? and how shall it be continued, when it conveys an offensive idea, or recalled again into the mouths of mankind, when it has once become unfamiliar by disuse, and unpleasing by unfamiliarity?

There is another cause of alteration more prevalent than any other, which yet in the present state of the world cannot be obviated. A mixture of two languages will produce a third distinct from both; and they will always be mixed, where the chief part of education, and the most conspicuous accomplishment, is skill in ancient or in foreign tongues. He that has long cultivated another language, will find its words and combinations crowd upon his memory; and haste and negligence, refinement and affectation, will obtrude borrowed terms and exotick expressions.

The great pest of speech is frequency of translation. No book was ever turned from one language into another, without imparting something of its native idiom; this is the most mischievous and comprehensive innovation; single words may enter by thousands, and the fabrick of the tongue continue the same; but new phraseology changes much at once; it alters not the single stones of the building, but the order of the columns. If an academy

should be established for the cultivation of our style; which I, who can never wish to see dependance multiplied, hope the spirit of English liberty will hinder or destroy, let them, instead of compiling grammars and dictionaries, endeavour, with all their influence, to stop the license of translators, whose idleness and ignorance, if it be suffered to proceed, will reduce us to babble a dialect of France.

If the changes, that we fear, be thus irresistible, what remains but to acquiesce with silence, as in the other insurmountable distresses of humanity? It remains that we retard what we cannot repel, that we palliate what we cannot cure. Life may be lengthened by care, though death cannot be ultimately defeated: tongues, like governments, have a natural tendency to degeneration; we have long preserved our constitution, let us make some struggles for our language[f].

In hope of giving longevity to that which its own nature forbids to be immortal, I have devoted this book, the labour of years, to the honour of my country, that we may no longer yield the palm of philology, without a contest, to the nations of the continent. The chief glory of every people arises from its authors: whether I shall add any thing by my own writings to the reputation of English literature, must be left to time: much of my life has been lost under the pressures of disease; much has been trifled away; and much has always been spent in provision for the day that was passing over me; but I shall not think

[f] Blackstone very frequently denounces the use of Norman French in our law proceedings, and in Parliament as a badge of slavery, which he could have wished to see "fall into total oblivion, unless it be reserved as a solemn memento to remind us that our liberties are mortal, having once been destroyed by a foreign force." Much amusing and interesting research on the once prevalent use of French in England, is exhibited in Barrington's Observations on the more Antient Statutes.

> And Frenche she spake full fetously;
> After the schole of *Stratforde at Bowe*,
> For Frenche of Paris was to her unknowne.
> Chaucer's Prologue to the Prioress' Tale.

my employment useless or ignoble, if, by my assistance, foreign nations, and distant ages, gain access to the propagators of knowledge, and understand the teachers of truth; if my labours afford light to the repositories of science, and add celebrity to Bacon, to Hooker, to Milton, and to Boyle.

When I am animated by this wish, I look with pleasure on my book, however defective, and deliver it to the world with the spirit of a man that has endeavoured well. That it will immediately become popular I have not promised to myself: a few wild blunders, and risible absurdities, from which no work of such multiplicity was ever free, may, for a time, furnish folly with laughter, and harden ignorance into contempt; but useful diligence will at last prevail, and there never can be wanting some who distinguish desert; who will consider that no dictionary of a living tongue ever can be perfect, since, while it is hastening to publication, some words are budding, and some falling away; that a whole life cannot be spent upon syntax and etymology, and that even a whole life would not be sufficient; that he, whose design includes whatever language can express, must often speak of what he does not understand; that a writer will sometimes be hurried by eagerness to the end, and sometimes faint with weariness under a task, which Scaliger compares to the labours of the anvil and the mine; that what is obvious is not always known, and what is known is not always present; that sudden fits of inadvertency will surprise vigilance, slight avocations will seduce attention, and casual eclipses of the mind will darken learning; and that the writer shall often in vain trace his memory, at the moment of need, for that which yesterday he knew with intuitive readiness, and which will come uncalled into his thoughts to-morrow.

In this work, when it shall be found that much is omitted, let it not be forgotten that much likewise is performed; and though no book was ever spared out of tenderness to the author, and the world is little solicitous to know

whence proceeded the faults of that which it condemns; yet it may gratify curiosity to inform it, that the English Dictionary was written with little assistance of the learned, and without any patronage of the great; not in the soft obscurities of retirement, or under the shelter of academick bowers, but amidst inconvenience and distraction, in sickness and in sorrow. It may repress the triumph of malignant criticism to observe, that if our language is not here fully displayed, I have only failed in an attempt, which no human powers have hitherto completed. If the lexicons of ancient tongues, now immutably fixed, and comprised in a few volumes, be yet, after the toil of successive ages, inadequate and delusive; if the aggregated knowledge, and co-operating diligence of the Italian academicians, did not secure them from the censure of Beni; if the embodied criticks of France, when fifty years had been spent upon their work, were obliged to change its economy, and give their second edition another form, I may surely be contented without the praise of perfection, which, if I could obtain, in this gloom of solitude, what would it avail me? I have protracted my work till most of those, whom I wished to please, have sunk into the grave, and success and miscarriage are empty sounds: I, therefore, dismiss it with frigid tranquillity, having little to fear or hope from censure or from praise[g].

[g] Dr. Johnson's Dictionary was published on the fifteenth day of April 1755, in two vols. folio, price 4*l*. 10*s*. bound. The booksellers who engaged in this national work were the Knaptons, Longman, Hitch and Co. Millar, and Dodsley.

ADVERTISEMENT

TO THE

FOURTH EDITION

OF THE

ENGLISH DICTIONARY[b].

MANY are the works of human industry, which to begin and finish are hardly granted to the same man. He that undertakes to compile a dictionary, undertakes that, which, if it comprehends the full extent of his design, he knows himself unable to perform. Yet his labours, though deficient, may be useful, and with the hope of this inferiour praise, he must incite his activity, and solace his weariness.

Perfection is unattainable, but nearer and nearer approaches may be made; and, finding my Dictionary about to be reprinted, I have endeavoured, by a revisal, to make it less reprehensible. I will not deny that I found many parts requiring emendation, and many more capable of improvement. Many faults I have corrected, some superfluities I have taken away, and some deficiencies I have supplied. I have methodised some parts that were disordered, and illuminated some that were obscure. Yet the changes or additions bear a very small proportion to the whole. The critick will now have less to object, but the student who has bought any of the former copies needs not repent; he will not, without nice collation, perceive how they differ; and usefulness seldom depends upon little things.

For negligence or deficience, I have, perhaps, not need of more apology than the nature of the work will furnish: I have left that inaccurate which never was made exact, and that imperfect which never was completed.

[b] Published in folio, 1773.

PREFACE

TO THE

OCTAVO EDITION

OF THE

ENGLISH DICTIONARY[1].

HAVING been long employed in the study and cultivation of the English language, I lately published a dictionary, like those compiled by the academies of Italy and France, for the use of such as aspire to exactness of criticism or elegance of style.

But it has been since considered that works of that kind are by no means necessary to the greater number of readers, who, seldom intending to write or presuming to judge, turn over books only to amuse their leisure, and to gain degrees of knowledge suitable to lower characters, or necessary to the common business of life: these know not any other use of a dictionary than that of adjusting orthography, or explaining terms of science, or words of infrequent occurrence or remote derivation.

For these purposes many dictionaries have been written by different authors, and with different degrees of skill; but none of them have yet fallen into my hands by which even the lowest expectations could be satisfied. Some of their authors wanted industry, and others literature: some knew not their own defects, and others were too idle to supply them.

For this reason a small dictionary appeared yet to be wanting to common readers; and, as I may without arrogance claim to myself a longer acquaintance with the

[1] Published in 2 vols. 1756.

lexicography of our language than any other writer has had, I shall hope to be considered as having more experience at least than most of my predecessors, and as more likely to accommodate the nation with a vocabulary of daily use. I, therefore, offer to the publick an abstract or epitome of my former work.

In comparing this with other dictionaries of the same kind, it will be found to have several advantages.

1. It contains many words not to be found in any other.

2. Many barbarous terms and phrases, by which other dictionaries may vitiate the style, are rejected from this.

3. The words are more correctly spelled, partly by attention to their etymology, and partly by observation of the practice of the best authors.

4. The etymologies and derivations, whether from foreign languages or from native roots, are more diligently traced, and more distinctly noted.

5. The senses of each word are more copiously enumerated, and more clearly explained.

6. Many words occurring in the elder authors, such as Spenser, Shakespeare, and Milton, which had been hitherto omitted, are here carefully inserted; so that this book may serve as a glossary or expository index to the poetical writers.

7. To the words, and to the different senses of each word, are subjoined from the large dictionary the names of those writers by whom they have been used; so that the reader who knows the different periods of the language, and the time of its authors, may judge of the elegance or prevalence of any word, or meaning of a word; and without recurring to other books, may know what are antiquated, what are unusual, and what are recommended by the best authority.

The words of this Dictionary, as opposed to others, are more diligently collected, more accurately spelled, more faithfully explained, and more authentically ascertained. Of an abstract it is not necessary to say more; and I hope, it will not be found that truth requires me to say less.

MISCELLANEOUS OBSERVATIONS

ON THE

TRAGEDY OF MACBETH:

WITH REMARKS

ON SIR T. HANMER'S EDITION OF SHAKESPEARE.

FIRST PRINTED IN THE YEAR 1745.

NOTE I.

ACT I. SCENE I.

Enter three Witches.

IN order to make a true estimate of the abilities and merit of a writer, it is always necessary to examine the genius of his age, and the opinions of his contemporaries. A poet, who should now make the whole action of his tragedy depend upon enchantment, and produce the chief events by the assistance of supernatural agents, would be censured as transgressing the bounds of probability; he would be banished from the theatre to the nursery, and condemned to write fairy tales instead of tragedies; but a survey of the notions, that prevailed at the time when this play was written, will prove, that Shakespeare was in no danger of such censures, since he only turned the system that was then universally admitted to his advantage, and was far from over-burdening the credulity of his audience.

The reality of witchcraft or enchantment, which, though not strictly the same, are confounded in this play, has in all ages and countries been credited by the common people, and in most by the learned themselves[k]. These

[k] "To deny the possibility, nay, the actual existence of witchcraft and

phantoms have indeed appeared more frequently, in proportion as the darkness of ignorance has been more gross; but it cannot be shown, that the brightest gleams of knowledge have at any time been sufficient to drive them out of the world. The time, in which this kind of credulity was at its height, seems to have been that of the holy war, in which the Christians imputed all their defeats to enchantment or diabolical opposition, as they ascribe their success to the assistance of their military saints; and the learned Dr. Warburton appears to believe (Supplement to the Introduction to Don Quixote) that the first accounts of enchantments were brought into this part of the world by those who returned from their eastern expeditions. But there is always some distance between the birth and maturity of folly, as of wickedness: this opinion had long existed, though, perhaps, the application of it had in no foregoing age been so frequent, nor the reception so general. Olympiodorus, in Photius's Extracts, tells us of one Libanius, who practised this kind of military magick, and having promised χώρις ὁπλιτῶν κατὰ βαρβάρων ἐνεργεῖν, *to perform great things against the barbarians without soldiers*, was, at the instances of the emperess Placidia, put to death, when he was about to have given proofs of his abilities. The emperess showed some kindness in her anger by cutting him off at a time so convenient for his reputation.

But a more remarkable proof of the antiquity of this notion may be found in St. Chrysostom's book de Sa-

sorcery, is, at once flatly to contradict the revealed word of God, in various passages both of the Old and New Testament: and the thing itself is a truth to which every nation in the world hath, in its turn, borne testimony, either by examples seemingly well-attested, or by prohibitory laws, which, at least, suppose the possibility of commerce with evil spirits." Blackstone, Commentaries iv. 60. The learned judge, however, concludes with calling it a "dubious crime," and approves the maxim of the philosophic Montesquieu, whom no one would lightly accuse of superstition, that "il faut être très-circonspect dans la *poursuite* de la magie et de l'hérésie." Esprit des Lois, xii. 5. Selden attempted to justify the punishing witchcraft capitally. Works, iii. 2077. See Spectator, 117. Barrington's Antient Statutes, 407.

cerdotio, which exhibits a scene of enchantments, not exceeded by any romance of the middle age; he supposes a spectator, overlooking a field of battle, attended by one that points out all the various objects of horrour, the engines of destruction, and the arts of slaughter. Δεικνύτω δὲ ἔτι παρὰ τοῖς ἐναντίοις καὶ πετομένους ἵππους διά τινος μαγγανείας, καὶ ὁπλίτας δι' ἀέρος φερομένους, καὶ πάσην γοητείας δύναμιν καὶ ἰδέαν. *Let him then proceed to show him in the opposite armies horses flying by enchantment, armed men transported through the air, and every power and form of magick.* Whether St. Chrysostom believed that such performances were really to be seen in a day of battle, or only endeavoured to enliven his description, by adopting the notions of the vulgar, it is equally certain, that such notions were in his time received, and that, therefore, they were not imported from the Saracens in a later age; the wars with the Saracens, however, gave occasion to their propagation, not only as bigotry naturally discovers prodigies, but as the scene of action was removed to a greater distance, and distance, either of time or place, is sufficient to reconcile weak minds to wonderful relations.

The reformation did not immediately arrive at its meridian, and though day was gradually increasing upon us, the goblins of witchcraft still continued to hover in the twilight. In the time of queen Elizabeth was the remarkable trial of the witches of Warbois, whose conviction is still commemorated in an annual sermon at Huntingdon. But in the reign of king James, in which this tragedy was written, many circumstances concurred to propagate and confirm this opinion. The king, who was much celebrated for his knowledge, had, before his arrival in England, not only examined in person a woman accused of witchcraft, but had given a very formal account of the practices and illusions of evil spirits, the compacts of witches, the ceremonies used by them, the manner of detecting them, and the justice of punishing them, in his dialogues of *Dæmonologie*, written in the Scottish dialect, and published at Edinburgh. This book was, soon after

his accession, reprinted at London; and, as the ready way to gain king James's favour was to flatter his speculations, the system of *Dæmonologie* was immediately adopted by all who desired either to gain preferment or not to lose it. Thus the doctrine of witchcraft was very powerfully inculcated; and as the greatest part of mankind have no other reason for their opinions than that they are in fashion, it cannot be doubted but this persuasion made a rapid progress, since vanity and credulity co-operated in its favour, and it had a tendency to free cowardice from reproach. The infection soon reached the parliament, who, in the first year of king James, made a law, by which it was enacted, chap. xii. That, "if any person shall use any invocation or conjuration of any evil or wicked spirit; 2. or shall consult, covenant with, entertain, employ, feed or reward any evil or cursed spirit to or for any intent or purpose; 3. or take up any dead man, woman or child out of the grave,—or the skin, bone or any part of the dead person, to be employed or used in any manner of witchcraft, sorcery, charm or enchantment; 4. or shall use, practise or exercise any sort of witchcraft, sorcery, charm or enchantment; 5. whereby any person shall be destroyed, killed, wasted, consumed, pined or lamed in any part of the body; 6. That every such person, being convicted, shall suffer death." This law was repealed in our time.

Thus, in the time of Shakespeare, was the doctrine of witchcraft at once established by law and by the fashion, and it became not only unpolite, but criminal, to doubt it; and as prodigies are always seen in proportion as they are expected, witches were every day discovered, and multiplied so fast in some places, that bishop Hall mentions a village in Lancashire, where their number was greater than that of the houses[1]. The Jesuits and Sectaries took advantage of this universal errour, and endeavoured to promote the interest of their parties by pretended cures of

[1] In Nashe's Lenten Stuff, 1599, it is said, that no less than six hundred witches were executed at one time. Reed.——Boswell's Shakespeare, xi. 5.

persons afflicted by evil spirits; but they were detected and exposed by the clergy of the established church.

Upon this general infatuation Shakespeare might be easily allowed to found a play, especially since he has followed with great exactness such histories as were then thought true; nor can it be doubted that the scenes of enchantment, however they may now be ridiculed, were both by himself and his audience thought awful and affecting[m].

NOTE III.

ACT I. SCENE II.

——The merciless Macdonal,—from the western isles
Of *Kernes* and *Gallowglasses* was supply'd;
And fortune on his damned *quarry* smiling,
Shew'd like a rebel's whore.——

Kernes are light-armed, and *Gallowglasses* heavy-armed soldiers. The word *quarry* has no sense that is properly applicable in this place, and, therefore, it is necessary to read,

And fortune on his damned *quarrel* smiling.

Quarrel was formerly used for *cause*, or for *the occasion of a quarrel*, and is to be found in that sense in Hollingshed's account of the story of Macbeth, who, upon the creation of the prince of Cumberland, thought, says the historian, that he had *a just quarrel* to endeavour after the crown. The sense, therefore, is, *fortune smiling on his execrable cause, &c.*

NOTE III.

If I say sooth, I must report, they were
As cannons overcharg'd with double cracks,
So they redoubled strokes upon the foe.

Dr. Grey, in his notes on Hudibras, mentions, that Hopkins the noted witch-finder hanged sixty suspected witches in one year. He also cites Hutchinson on Witchcraft for thirty thousand having been burnt in 150 years.

See Barrington on Antient Statutes

[m] Johnson's apprehensions here are surely unfounded. The region of Fancy, however, in his mind, was very circumscribed. Mrs. Montague's chapter on Shakespeare's Preternatural Beings, in her excellent Essay, will repay perusal. See too Schlegel on Dramatic Literature.

Mr. Theobald has endeavoured to improve the sense of this passage by altering the punctuation thus:

——They were
As cannons overcharg'd; with double cracks
So they redoubled strokes.——

He declares, with some degree of exultation, that he has no idea of *a cannon charged with double cracks*; but, surely, the great author will not gain much by an alteration which makes him say of a hero, that he *redoubles strokes with double cracks*, an expression not more loudly to be applauded, or more easily pardoned, than that which is rejected in its favour. That a *cannon is charged with thunder* or *with double thunders* may be written, not only without nonsense, but with elegance: and nothing else is here meant by *cracks*, which in the time of this writer was a word of such emphasis and dignity, that in this play he terms the general dissolution of nature the *crack of doom*.

There are among Mr. Theobald's alterations others which I do not approve, though I do not always censure them; for some of his amendments are so excellent, that, even when he has failed, he ought to be treated with indulgence and respect.

NOTE IV.

King. But who comes here?
Mal. The worthy Thane of Rosse.
Len. What haste looks through his eyes?
So should he look, that *seems* to speak things strange.

The meaning of this passage, as it now stands, is, *so should he look, that looks as if he told things strange*. But Rosse neither yet told strange things, nor could look as if he told them; Lenox only conjectured from his air that he had strange things to tell, and, therefore, undoubtedly said,

——What haste looks through his eyes?
So should he look, that *teems* to speak things strange.

He looks like one that *is big* with something of importance; a metaphor so natural, that it is every day used in common discourse.

NOTE V.

SCENE III.

Thunder. Enter the three Witches.

1 *Witch.* Where hast thou been, sister?
2 *Witch.* Killing swine.
3 *Witch.* Sister, where thou?
1 *Witch.* A sailor's wife had chesnuts in her lap,
And mouncht, and mouncht, and mouncht. Give me, quoth I.
(1) Aroint thee, witch!— the rump-fed ronyon cries.
Her husband's to Aleppo gone, master o' th' Tyger:
But in a sieve I'll thither sail,
And like a rat without a tail,
I'll do—I'll do—and I'll do.
2 *Witch.* I'll give thee a wind
1 *Witch.* Thou art kind.
3 *Witch.* And I another.
1 *Witch.* I myself have all the other.
And the (2) very points they blow;
All the quarters that they know,
I' th' ship-man's card.——
I will drain him dry as hay,
Sleep shall neither night nor day,
Hang upon his pent-house lid;
He shall live a man (3) forbid;
Weary sev'n nights, nine times nine,
Shall he dwindle, peak and pine;
Tho' his bark cannot be lost,
Yet it shall be tempest-tost.
Look, what I have.
2 *Witch.* Shew me, Shew me.

(1) Aroint thee, witch!

In one of the folio editions the reading is *anoint thee*, in a sense very consistent with the common accounts of

witches, who are related to perform many supernatural acts by the means of unguents, and particularly to fly through the air to the place where they meet at their hellish festivals. In this sense *anoint thee, witch,* will mean, *away, witch, to your infernal assembly.* This reading I was inclined to favour, because I had met with the word *aroint* in no other author; till looking into Hearne's Collections, I found it in a very old drawing, that he has published, in which St. Patrick is represented visiting hell, and putting the devils into great confusion by his presence, of whom one that is driving the damned before him with a prong, has a label issuing out from his mouth with these words, "OUT OUT ARONGT," of which the last is evidently the same with *aroint,* and used in the same sense as in this passage.

(2) And the *very* points they blow.

As the word *very* is here of no other use than to fill up the verse, it is likely that Shakespeare wrote *various,* which might be easily mistaken for *very,* being either negligently read, hastily pronounced, or imperfectly heard.

(3) He shall live a man *forbid.*

Mr. Theobald has very justly explained *forbid* by *accursed,* but without giving any reason of his interpretation. To *bid* is originally *to pray,* as in this Saxon fragment:

He ıꞅ ƿıꞅ ꝥ bıꞇ ⁊ boꞇe, &c.

He is wise that *prays* and makes amends.

As to *forbid,* therefore, implies to *prohibit,* in opposition to the word *bid,* in its present sense, it signifies by the same kind of opposition to *curse,* when it is derived from the same word in its primitive meaning.

NOTE VI.

SCENE V

THE incongruity of all the passages, in which the *Thane of Cawdor* is mentioned, is very remarkable; in the second

scene the Thanes of Rosse and Angus bring the king an account of the battle, and inform him that Norway,

> Assisted by that most disloyal traitor
> The Thane of Cawdor, 'gan a dismal conflict.

It appears that Cawdor was taken prisoner, for the king says, in the same scene,

> ——Go, pronounce his death;
> And with his former title greet Macbeth.

Yet though Cawdor was thus taken by Macbeth, in arms against his king, when Macbeth is saluted, in the fourth scene, *Thane of Cawdor*, by the Weird Sisters, he asks,

> But how, of *Cawdor?* the Thane of Cawdor lives.
> A prosp'rous gentleman;——

And in the next line considers the promises, that he should be Cawdor and King, as equally unlikely to be accomplished. How can Macbeth be ignorant of the state of the Thane of Cawdor, whom he has just defeated and taken prisoner, or call him a *prosperous gentleman* who has forfeited his title and life by open rebellion? Or why should he wonder that the title of the rebel whom he has overthrown should be conferred upon him? He cannot be supposed to dissemble his knowledge of the condition of Cawdor, because he inquires with all the ardour of curiosity, and the vehemence of sudden astonishment; and because nobody is present but Banquo, who had an equal part in the battle, and was equally acquainted with Cawdor's treason. However, in the next scene, his ignorance still continues; and when Rosse and Angus present him from the king with his new title, he cries out,

> ——The Thane of Cawdor lives;
> Why do you dress me in his borrow'd robes?

Rosse and Angus, who were the messengers that, in the second scene, informed the king of the assistance given by Cawdor to the invader, having lost, as well as Macbeth, all

memory of what they had so lately seen and related, make this answer,

——Whether he was
Combin'd with Norway, or did line the rebel
With hidden help and 'vantage, or with both
He labour'd in his country's wreck, I know not.

Neither Rosse knew what he had just reported, nor Macbeth what he had just done. This seems not to be one of the faults that are to be imputed to the transcribers, since, though the inconsistency of Rosse and Angus might be removed, by supposing that their names are erroneously inserted, and that only Rosse brought the account of the battle, and only Angus was sent to compliment Macbeth, yet the forgetfulness of Macbeth cannot be palliated, since what he says could not have been spoken by any other.

NOTE VII.

My thought, whose murther yet is but fantastical,
Shakes so my single state of man,——

The *single state of man* seems to be used by Shakespeare for an *individual*, in opposition to a *commonwealth*, or *conjunct body* of men.

NOTE VIII.

Macbeth.——Come what come may,
Time and the hour runs through the roughest day.

I suppose every reader is disgusted at the tautology in this passage, *time and the hour*, and will, therefore, willingly believe that Shakespeare wrote it thus,

——Come what come may,
Time! on!—the hour runs thro' the roughest day.

Macbeth is deliberating upon the events which are to befall him; but finding no satisfaction from his own thoughts, he grows impatient of reflection, and resolves to wait the close without harassing himself with conjectures:

——Come what come may.

But, to shorten the pain of suspense, he calls upon time, in the usual style of ardent desire, to quicken his motion,

Time! on!——

He then comforts himself with the reflection that all his perplexity must have an end,

——The hour runs thro' the roughest day.

This conjecture is supported by the passage in the letter to his lady, in which he says, *They referr'd me to the* coming on of time *with, Hail, King that shall be.*

NOTE IX.

SCENE VI.

Malcolm.——Nothing in his life
Became him like the leaving it. He dy'd,
As one that had been studied in his death,
To throw away the dearest thing he *ow'd,*
As 'twere a careless trifle.

As the word *ow'd* affords here no sense, but such as is forced and unnatural, it cannot be doubted that it was originally written, The dearest thing he *own'd;* a reading which needs neither defence nor explication.

NOTE X.

King.——There's no art,
To find the mind's construction in the face:

The *construction of the mind* is, I believe, a phrase peculiar to Shakespeare; it implies the *frame* or *disposition* of the mind, by which it is determined to good or ill.

NOTE XI.

Macbeth. The service and the loyalty I owe,
In doing it, pays itself. Your highness' part
Is to receive our duties; and our duties
Are to your throne and state, children and servants;
Which do but what they should, by doing *every thing*
Safe tow'rd your love and honour.

Of the last line of this speech, which is certainly, as it is now read, unintelligible, an emendation has been attempted, which Dr. Warburton and Mr. Theobald have admitted as the true reading:

——our duties
Are to your throne and state, children and servants,
Which do but what they should, in doing every thing
Fiefs to your love and honour.

My esteem for these criticks, inclines me to believe, that they cannot be much pleased with the expressions, *Fiefs to love*, or *Fiefs to honour*; and that they have proposed this alteration, rather because no other occurred to them, than because they approved it. I shall, therefore, propose a bolder change, perhaps, with no better success, but "sua cuique placent." I read thus,

——our duties
Are to your throne and state, children and servants,
Which do but what they should, in doing *nothing*,
Save tow'rd *your love and honour.*

We do but perform our duty, when we contract all our views to your service, when we act with *no other* principle than regard to *your love and honour.*

It is probable that this passage was first corrupted by writing *safe* for *save*, and the lines then stood thus:

——doing nothing
Safe tow'rd your love and honour.

Which the next transcriber observing to be wrong, and yet not being able to discover the real fault, altered to the present reading.

NOTE XII.

SCENE VII.

——Thou'dst have, great Glamis,
That which cries, "thus thou must do, if thou have *it*;
"And that," &c.

As the object of Macbeth's desire is here introduced speaking of itself, it is necessary to read,

——thou'dst have, great Glamis,
That which cries, "thus thou must do, if thou have *me*."

NOTE XIII.

——Hie thee hither,
That I may pour my spirits in thine ear;
And chastise with the valour of my tongue
All that impedes thee from the golden round,
Which fate and metaphysical aid doth *seem*
To have thee crown'd withal.

For *seem*, the sense evidently directs us to read *seek*. The crown to which fate destines thee, and which preternatural agents *endeavour* to bestow upon thee. The *golden round* is the *diadem*.

NOTE XIV.

Lady Macbeth.——Come, all you spirits
That tend on *mortal thoughts*, unsex me here;
And fill me, from the crown to th' toe, top-full
Of direst cruelty! make thick my blood,
Stop up th' access and passage to remorse;
That no compunctious visitings of nature
Shake my fell purpose, nor *keep peace* between
Th' effect and it!

——Mortal thoughts,——

This expression signifies not *the thoughts of mortals*, but *murderous, deadly*, or *destructive designs*. So in Act v.

Hold fast the *mortal* sword.

And in another place,

With twenty *mortal* murthers.

——Nor keep *peace* between
Th' effect and it!——

The intent of Lady Macbeth evidently is to wish that no womanish tenderness, or conscientious remorse, may hinder her purpose from proceeding to effect; but neither this, nor indeed any other sense, is expressed by the present reading, and, therefore, it cannot be doubted that Shakespeare wrote differently, perhaps, thus:

That no compunctious visitings of nature
Shake my fell purpose, nor *keep pace* between
Th' effect and it.

To *keep pace between*, may signify to *pass between*, to *intervene*. *Pace* is, on many occasions, a favourite of Shakespeare. This phrase, is indeed, not usual in this sense; but was it not its novelty that gave occasion to the present corruption?

NOTE XV.

SCENE VIII.

King. This castle hath a pleasant *seat*; the air
Nimbly and sweetly recommends itself
Unto our gentle senses.
Ban. This guest of summer,
The temple-haunting martlet, does approve,
By his lov'd mansionry, that heaven's breath
Smells wooingly here. No jutty frieze,
Buttrice, nor coigne of 'vantage, but this bird
Hath made his pendent bed, and procreant cradle:
Where they most breed and haunt, I have observ'd,
The air is delicate.

In this short scene, I propose a slight alteration to be made, by substituting *site* for *seat*, as the ancient word for *situation*; and *sense* for *senses*, as more agreeable to the measure; for which reason likewise I have endeavoured to adjust this passage,

——heaven's breath
Smells wooingly here. No jutty frieze,

by changing the punctuation and adding the syllable thus,

——heaven's breath
Smells wooingly. Here is no jutty frieze.

Those who have perused books, printed at the time of the first editions of Shakespeare, know that greater alterations than these are necessary almost in every page, even where it is not to be doubted, that the copy was correct.

NOTE XVI.

SCENE. X.

The arguments by which Lady Macbeth persuades her husband to commit the murder, afford a proof of Shakespeare's knowledge of human nature. She urges the excellence and dignity of courage, a glittering idea which has dazzled mankind from age to age, and animated sometimes the housebreaker, and sometimes the conqueror; but this sophism Macbeth has for ever destroyed, by distinguishing true from false fortitude, in a line and a half; of which it may almost be said, that they ought to bestow immortality on the author, though all his other productions had been lost:

> I dare do all that may become a man;
> Who dares do more is none.

This topick, which has been always employed with too much success, is used in this scene, with peculiar propriety, to a soldier by a woman. Courage is the distinguishing virtue of a soldier, and the reproach of cowardice cannot be borne by any man from a woman, without great impatience.

She then urges the oaths by which he had bound himself to murder Duncan, another art of sophistry by which men have sometimes deluded their consciences, and persuaded themselves that what would be criminal in others is virtuous in them: this argument Shakespeare, whose plan obliged him to make Macbeth yield, has not confuted, though he might easily have shown that a former obligation could not be vacated by a latter.

NOTE XVII.

> Letting I dare not wait upon I would,
> Like the poor cat i' th' adage.

The adage alluded to is, The cat loves fish but dares not wet her foot.

> Catus amat pisces, sed non vult tingere plantas.

NOTE XVIII.

Will I with wine and wassel so convince.

To convince is, in Shakespeare, to *overpower* or *subdue*, as in this play:

——Their malady *convinces*
The great assay of art.

NOTE XIX.

——Who shall bear the guilt
Of our great *quell?*

Quell is *murder*, *manquellers* being, in the old language, the term for which *murderers* is now used.

NOTE XX.

ACT II. SCENE II.

——Now o'er one half the world
(1) *Nature seems dead*, and wicked dreams abuse
The curtain'd sleep; now witchcraft celebrates
Pale Hecat's offerings: and wither'd murther,
Alarum'd by his sentinel, the wolf,
Whose howl's his watch, thus with his stealthy pace,
With (2) *Tarquin's ravishing sides* tow'rds his design
Moves like a ghost.—Thou sound and firm-set earth,
Hear not my steps, which way they walk, for fear
Thy very stones prate of my where-about;
And (3) *take the present horror from the time,*
Which now suits with it.——

(1)——Now o'er one half the world
Nature seems dead.

That is, *over our hemisphere all action and motion seem to have ceased.* This image, which is, perhaps, the most striking that poetry can produce, has been adopted by Dryden, in his Conquest of Mexico.

All things are hush'd as Nature's self lay dead,
The mountains seem to nod their drowsy head:
The little birds in dreams their songs repeat,
And sleeping flowers beneath the night dews sweat.
Even lust and envy sleep!

These lines, though so well known, I have transcribed, that the contrast between them and this passage of Shakespeare may be more accurately observed.

Night is described by two great poets, but one describes a night of quiet, the other of perturbation. In the night of Dryden, all the disturbers of the world are laid asleep; in that of Shakespeare, nothing but sorcery, lust, and murder, is awake. He that reads Dryden, finds himself lulled with serenity, and disposed to solitude and contemplation. He that peruses Shakespeare, looks round alarmed, and starts to find himself alone. One is the night of a lover; the other, that of a murderer.

(2)———Wither'd murder,
———thus with his stealthy pace,
With Tarquin's ravishing *sides* tow'rds his design,
Moves like a ghost.——

This was the reading of this passage in all the editions before that of Mr. Pope, who for *sides*, inserted in the text *strides*, which Mr. Theobald has tacitly copied from him, though a more proper alteration might, perhaps, have been made. A *ravishing stride* is an action of violence, impetuosity, and tumult, like that of a savage rushing on his prey; whereas the poet is here attempting to exhibit an image of secrecy and caution, of anxious circumspection and guilty timidity, the *stealthy pace* of a *ravisher* creeping into the chamber of a virgin, and of an assassin approaching the bed of him whom he proposes to murder, without awaking him; these he describes as *moving like ghosts*, whose progression is so different from *strides*, that it has been in all ages represented to be, as Milton expresses it,

Smooth sliding without step.

This hemistich will afford the true reading of this place, which is, I think, to be corrected thus:

——and wither'd murder,
——thus with his stealthy pace,
With Tarquin ravishing, *slides* tow'rds his design,
Moves like a ghost.

Tarquin is, in this place, the general name of a ravisher, and the sense is: Now is the time in which every one is asleep, but those who are employed in wickedness, the witch who is sacrificing to Hecate, and the ravisher, and the murderer, who, like me, are stealing upon their prey.

When the reading is thus adjusted, he wishes with great propriety, in the following lines, that the *earth* may not *hear his steps.*

(3) And take the present horror from the time,
Which now suits with it.———

I believe every one that has attentively read this dreadful soliloquy is disappointed at the conclusion, which, if not wholly unintelligible, is at least obscure, nor can be explained into any sense worthy of the author. I shall, therefore, propose a slight alteration,

——Thou sound and firm-set earth,
Hear not my steps, which way they walk, for fear
Thy very stones prate of my where-about,
And *talk*—the present horror of the time!——
That now suits with it.——

Macbeth has, in the foregoing lines, disturbed his imagination by enumerating all the terrours of the night; at length he is wrought up to a degree of frenzy, that makes him afraid of some supernatural discovery of his design, and calls out to the stones not to betray him, not to declare where he walks, nor *to talk.*—As he is going to say of what, he discovers the absurdity of his suspicion, and pauses, but is again overwhelmed by his guilt, and concludes that such are the horrours of the present night, that the stones may be expected to cry out against him:

That now suits with it.

He observes in a subsequent passage, that on such occasions *stones have been known to move.* It is now a very just and strong picture of a man about to commit a deliberate murder, under the strongest convictions of the wickedness of his design.

NOTE XXI.

SCENE IV.

Len. The night has been unruly; where we lay
Our chimneys were blown down: and, as they say,
Lamentings heard i' th' air, strange screams of death,
And prophesying with accents terrible
Of dire combustion, and confused events,
New-hatch'd to the woeful time.
The obscure bird clamour'd the live-long night:
Some say, the earth was fev'rous, and did shake.

These lines, I think, should be rather regulated thus:

——prophesying with accents terrible,
Of dire combustion and confused events.
New-hatch'd to th' woeful time, the obscure bird
Clamour'd the live-long night. Some say, the earth
Was fev'rous and did shake.

A *prophecy* of an *event new-hatch'd*, seems to be *a prophecy* of an *event past*. The term *new-hatch'd* is properly applicable to a *bird*, and that birds of ill omen should be *new-hatch'd to the woeful time* is very consistent with the rest of the prodigies here mentioned, and with the universal disorder into which nature is described as thrown, by the perpetration of this horrid murder.

NOTE XXII.

——Up, up, and see
The great doom's image, Malcolm, Banquo,
As from your graves rise up.——

The second line might have been so easily completed, that it cannot be supposed to have been left imperfect by the author, who probably wrote,

——Malcolm! Banquo! rise!
As from your graves rise up.——

Many other emendations, of the same kind, might be made, without any greater deviation from the printed copies, than is found in each of them from the rest.

NOTE XXIII.

Macbeth.——Here, lay Duncan,
His silver skin laced with his golden blood;
And his gash'd stabs look'd like a breach in nature,
For ruin's wasteful entrance: there, the murtherers
Steep'd in the colours of their trade, their daggers
Unmannerly breech'd with gore.——

An *unmannerly dagger*, and a *dagger breech'd*, or as in some editions *breach'd with gore*, are expressions not easily to be understood, nor can it be imagined that Shakespeare would reproach the murderer of his king only with *want of manners*. There are, undoubtedly, two faults in this passage, which I have endeavoured to take away by reading,

——Daggers
Unmanly drench'd with gore.——

I saw drench'd *with the king's blood the fatal daggers, not only instruments of murder but evidences of* cowardice.

Each of these words might easily be confounded with that which I have substituted for it by a hand not exact, a casual blot, or a negligent inspection.

Mr. Pope has endeavoured to improve one of these lines, by substituting *goary blood* for *golden blood*, but it may easily be admitted, that he who could on such an occasion talk of *lacing the silver skin*, would *lace it* with *golden blood*. No amendment can be made to this line, of which every word is equally faulty, but by a general blot.

It is not improbable, that Shakespeare put these forced and unnatural metaphors into the mouth of Macbeth, as a mark of artifice and dissimulation, to show the difference between the studied language of hypocrisy, and the natural outcries of sudden passion. This whole speech, considered in this light, is a remarkable instance of judgment, as it consists entirely of antitheses and metaphors.

NOTE XXIV.

ACT III. SCENE II.

Macbeth.——Our fears in Banquo
Stick deep; and in his royalty of nature
Reigns that, which would be fear'd. 'Tis much he dares,
And to that dauntless temper of his mind,
He hath a wisdom that doth guide his valour
To act in safety. There is none but he,
Whose being I do fear: and, under him,
My genius is rebuk'd; (1) *as, it is said,*
Anthony's was by Cæsar. He chid the sisters,
When first they put the name of king upon me,
And bade them speak to him; then, prophet-like,
They hail'd him father to a line of kings:
Upon my head they plac'd a fruitless crown,
And put a barren sceptre in my gripe,
Thence to be wrench'd with an unlineal hand,
No son of mine succeeding. If 'tis so,
For Banquo's issue have I 'fil'd my mind;
For them, the gracious Duncan have I murther'd,
Put rancours in the vessel of my peace
Only for them; and mine eternal jewel
Given to the (2) *common enemy of man,*
To make them kings,—the seed of Banquo kings.
Rather than so, come fate into the list,
(3) And champion me to th' *utterance!* ———

(1)——As, it is said,
Anthony's was by Cæsar.

Though I would not often assume the critick's privilege, of being confident where certainty cannot be obtained, nor indulge myself too far, in departing from the established reading; yet I cannot but propose the rejection of this passage, which, I believe, was an insertion of some player, that, having so much learning as to discover to what Shakespeare alluded, was not willing that his audience should be less knowing than himself, and has, therefore, weakened the author's sense by the intrusion of a remote and useless

image into a speech bursting from a man wholly possessed with his own present condition, and, therefore, not at leisure to explain his own allusions to himself. If these words are taken away, by which not only the thought but the numbers are injured, the lines of Shakespeare close together without any traces of a breach.

My genius is rebuk'd. He chid the sisters.

(2)——The common enemy of man.

It is always an entertainment to an inquisitive reader, to trace a sentiment to its original source, and, therefore, though the term *enemy of man*, applied to the devil, is in itself natural and obvious, yet some may be pleased with being informed, that Shakespeare probably borrowed it from the first lines of the Destruction of Troy, a book which he is known to have read.

That this remark may not appear too trivial, I shall take occasion from it to point out a beautiful passage of Milton, evidently copied from a book of no greater authority: in describing the gates of hell, Book ii. v. 879, he says,

———On a sudden open fly,
With impetuous recoil and jarring sound,
Th' infernal doors, and on their hinges grate
Harsh thunder.

In the history of Don Bellianis, when one of the knights approaches, as I remember, the castle of Brandezar, the gates are said to open, *grating harsh thunder upon their brazen hinges.*

(3)———Come fate into the list,
And champion me to th' utterance.——

This passage will be best explained by translating it into the language from whence the only word of difficulty in it is borrowed. *Que la destinée se rende en lice, et qu'elle me donne un défi* à l'outrance. A challenge or a combat *à l'outrance, to extremity,* was a fixed term in the law of arms, used when the combatants engaged with an *odium internecinum, an intention to destroy each other,* in

opposition to trials of skill at festivals, or on other occasions, where the contest was only for reputation or a prize. The sense, therefore, is, Let fate, that has fore-doomed the exaltation of the sons of Banquo, enter the lists against me, with the utmost animosity, in defence of its own decrees, which I will endeavour to invalidate, whatever be the danger.

NOTE XXV.

Macbeth. Ay, in the catalogue, ye go for men;
As hounds, and grey-hounds, mongrels, spaniels, curs,
Shoughs, water-rugs, and demy-wolves are cleped
All by the name of dogs.

Though this is not the most sparkling passage in the play, and though the name of a dog is of no great importance, yet it may not be improper to remark, that there is no such species of dogs as *shoughs* mentioned by Caius De Canibus Britannicis, or any other writer that has fallen into my hands, nor is the word to be found in any dictionary which I have examined. I, therefore, imagined that it is falsely printed for *slouths*, a kind of slow hound bred in the southern parts of England, but was informed by a lady, that it is more probably used, either by mistake, or according to the orthography of that time, for *shocks*.

NOTE XXVI.

Macbeth.——In this hour, at most,
I will advise you where to plant yourselves;
Acquaint you with the perfect spy o' th' time,
The moment on't; for't must be done to-night,
And something from the palace.———

What is meant by *the spy of the time*, it will be found difficult to explain; and, therefore, sense will be cheaply gained by a slight alteration.—Macbeth is assuring the assassins that they shall not want directions to find Banquo, and, therefore, says,

I will———
Acquaint you with a perfect spy *o' th' time.*

Accordingly a third murderer joins them afterwards at the place of action.

Perfect is *well instructed,* or *well informed,* as in this play,

Though in your state of honour I am *perfect.*

Though I am well acquainted *with your quality and rank.*

NOTE XXVII.

SCENE IV.

2 *Murderer.* He needs not to mistrust, since he delivers
Our offices and what we have to do,
To the direction just.

Mr. Theobald has endeavoured unsuccessfully to amend this passage, in which nothing is faulty but the punctuation. The meaning of this abrupt dialogue is this: The *perfect spy,* mentioned by Macbeth in the foregoing scene, has, before they enter upon the stage, given them the directions which were promised at the time of their agreement; and, therefore, one of the murderers observes, that, since *he has given them such exact information, he needs not doubt of their performance.* Then, by way of exhortation to his associates, he cries out,

———To the direction just.

Now nothing remains but that we conform exactly to Macbeth's directions.

NOTE XXVIII.

SCENE V.

Macbeth. You know your own degrees, sit down:
At first and last, the hearty welcome.

As this passage stands, not only the numbers are very imperfect, but the sense, if any can be found, weak and contemptible. The numbers will be improved by reading,

——sit down at first,
And last a hearty welcome.

But for *last* should then be written *next*. I believe the true reading is,

You know your own degrees, sit down.—*To* first
And last the hearty welcome.

All of whatever degree, from the highest to the lowest, may be assured that their visit is well received.

NOTE XXIX

Macbeth.——There's blood upon thy face.

[*To the murderer, aside at the door.*

Murderer. 'Tis Banquo's then.

Macbeth. 'Tis better thee without, than *he* within.

The sense apparently requires that this passage should be read thus:

'Tis better thee without, than *him* within.

That is, *I am more pleased that the blood of Banquo should be on thy face, than in his body.*

NOTE XXX.

Lady Macbeth. O proper stuff!
This is the very painting of your fear:

[*Aside to Macbeth.*

This is the air-drawn dagger, which, you said,
Led you to Duncan. Oh, these flaws and starts,
Impostures to true fear, would well become
A woman's story at a winter's fire,
Authoriz'd by her grandam. Shame itself!
Why do you make such faces? When all's done,
You look but on a stool.

As *starts* can neither with propriety nor sense be called *impostures to true fear*, something else was undoubtedly intended by the author, who, perhaps, wrote,

———These flaws and starts,
Impostures true to fear, would well become
A woman's story.———

'These symptoms of terrour and amazement might better become *impostors true* only *to fear, might become a coward at the recital of such falsehoods, as no man could credit,*

whose understanding was not weakened by his terrours; tales, told by a woman over a fire on the authority of her grandam.

NOTE XXXI.

Macbeth.—Love and health to all!
Then I'll sit down: give me some wine, fill full:—
I drink to the general joy of the whole table,
And to our dear friend Banquo, whom we miss;
Would he were here! to all, and him, we thirst,
And all to all.———

Though this passage is, as it now stands, capable of more meanings than one, none of them are very satisfactory; and, therefore, I am inclined to read it thus:

——to all, and him, we thirst,
And hail to all.

Macbeth, being about to salute his company with a bumper, declares that he includes Banquo, though absent, in this act of kindness, and wishes *health* to all. *Hail* or *heil* for *health* was in such continual use among the good-fellows of ancient times, that a drinker was called a *was-heiler*, or a *wisher of health*, and the liquor was termed *was-heil*, because *health* was so often *wished* over it. Thus in the lines of Hanvil the monk,

Jamque vagante scypho, discincto gutture *was-heil*
Ingeminant *was-heil:* labor est plus perdere vini
Quam sitis.———

These words were afterwards corrupted into *wassail* and *wassailer*.

NOTE XXXII.

Macbeth.——Can such things be,
And overcome us, like a summer's cloud,
Without our special wonder? You make me strange
Even to the disposition that I *owe*,
When now I think, you can behold such sights,
And keep the natural ruby of your cheek,
When mine is blanched with fear.

This passage, as it now stands, is unintelligible, but may be restored to sense by a very slight alteration:

—— You make me strange
Ev'n to the disposition that I *know*.

Though I had before seen many instances of your courage, yet it now appears in a degree altogether new. *So that my long* acquaintance *with your* disposition *does not hinder me from that astonishment which* novelty *produces.*

NOTE XXXIII.

It will have blood, they say, blood will have blood,
Stones have been known to move, and trees to speak;
Augurs, that understand relations, have
By magpies, and by choughs, and rooks, brought forth
The secret'st man of blood.——

In this passage the first line loses much of its force by the present punctuation. Macbeth having considered the prodigy which has just appeared, infers justly from it, that the death of Duncan cannot pass unpunished;

It will have blood:——

then, after a short pause, declares it as the general observation of mankind, that murderers cannot escape:

——they say, blood will have blood.

Murderers, when they have practised all human means of security, are detected by supernatural directions:

Augurs, that understand relations, &c.

By the word *relation* is understood the *connexion* of effects with causes; to *understand relations* as *an augur*, is to know how those things *relate to* each other, which have no visible combination or dependence.

NOTE XXXIV.

SCENE VII.

Enter Lenox and another Lord.

As this tragedy, like the rest of Shakespeare's, is, perhaps, overstocked with personages, it is not easy to assign

a reason, why a nameless character should be introduced here, since nothing is said that might not, with equal propriety, have been put into the mouth of any other disaffected man. I believe, therefore, that in the original copy, it was written, with a very common form of contraction, *Lenox and An.* for which the transcriber, instead of Lenox and Angus, set down, Lenox and *another Lord.* The author had, indeed, been more indebted to the transcriber's fidelity and diligence, had he committed no errours of greater importance.

NOTE XXXV.

ACT IV. SCENE I.

As this is the chief scene of enchantment in the play, it is proper, in this place, to observe, with how much judgment Shakespeare has selected all the circumstances of his infernal ceremonies, and how exactly he has conformed to common opinions and traditions:

> Thrice the brinded cat hath mew'd.

The usual form in which familiar spirits are reported to converse with witches, is that of a cat. A witch, who was tried about half a century before the time of Shakespeare, had a cat named Rutterkin, as the spirit of one of those witches was Grimalkin; and when any mischief was to be done, she used to bid Rutterkin *go and fly;* but once, when she would have sent Rutterkin to torment a daughter of the countess of Rutland, instead of *going* or *flying,* he only cried *mew,* from whence she discovered that the lady was out of his power, the power of witches being not universal, but limited, as Shakespeare has taken care to inculcate:

> Though his bark cannot be lost,
> Yet it shall be tempest-tost.

The common afflictions which the malice of witches produced, were melancholy, fits, and loss of flesh, which are threatened by one of Shakespeare's witches:

Weary sev'n nights, nine times nine,
Shall he dwindle, peak, and pine.

It was, likewise, their practice to destroy the cattle of their neighbours, and the farmers have, to this day, many ceremonies to secure their cows and other cattle from witchcraft; but they seem to have been most suspected of malice against swine. Shakespeare has, accordingly, made one of his witches declare that she has been *killing swine*; and Dr. Harsenet observes, that, about that time, "a sow could not be ill of the measles, nor a girl of the sullens, but some old woman was charged with witchcraft."

Toad, that under the cold stone,
Days and nights hast thirty-one,
Swelter'd venom sleeping got,
Boil thou first i' the charmed pot.

Toads have, likewise, long lain under the reproach of being by some means accessary to witchcraft, for which reason Shakespeare, in the first scene of this play, calls one of the spirits Padocke, or Toad, and now takes care to put a toad first into the pot. When Vaninus was seized at Tholouse, there was found at his lodgings, "ingens bufo vitro inclusus," *a great toad shut in a vial*, upon which those that prosecuted him "veneficium exprobrabant," *charged him*, I suppose, *with witchcraft*.

Fillet of a fenny snake,
In the cauldron boil and bake:
Eye of newt, and toe of frog;—
For a charm, &c.

The propriety of these ingredients may be known by consulting the books De Viribus Animalium and De Mirabilibus Mundi, ascribed to Albertus Magnus, in which the reader, who has time and credulity, may discover very wonderful secrets.

Finger of birth-strangled babe,
Ditch-deliver'd by a drab—

It has been already mentioned, in the law against witches, that they are supposed to take up dead bodies to

use in enchantments, which was confessed by the woman whom king James examined, and who had of a dead body, that was divided in one of their assemblies, two fingers for her share. It is observable, that Shakespeare, on this great occasion, which involves the fate of a king, multiplies all the circumstances of horrour. The babe, whose finger is used, must be strangled in its birth; the grease must not only be human, but must have dropped from a gibbet, the gibbet of a murderer; and even the sow, whose blood is used, must have offended nature by devouring her own farrow. These are touches of judgment and genius.

> And now about the cauldron sing——
> Black spirits and white,
> Red spirits and grey,
> Mingle, mingle, mingle,
> You that mingle may.

And, in a former part:

> ——weird sisters hand in hand,——
> Thus do go about, about;
> Thrice to thine, and thrice to mine,
> And thrice again, to make up nine;

These two passages I have brought together, because they both seem subject to the objection of too much levity for the solemnity of enchantment, and may both be shown, by one quotation from Camden's account of Ireland, to be founded upon a practice really observed by the uncivilized natives of that country. "When any one gets a fall," says the informer of Camden, "he starts up, and, *turning three times to the right*, digs a hole in the earth; for they imagine that there is a spirit in the ground, and if he falls sick in two or three days, they send one of their women that is skilled in that way to the place, where she says, I call thee from the east, west, north, and south, from the groves, the woods, the rivers, and the fens, from the *fairies, red, black, white.*" There was, likewise, a book writ-

ten before the time of Shakespeare, describing, amongst other properties, the *colours* of spirits.

Many other circumstances might be particularized, in which Shakespeare has shown his judgment and his knowledge[n].

NOTE XXXVI.

SCENE II.

Macbeth. Thou art too like the spirit of Banquo; down!
Thy crown does (1) sear mine eye-balls:——and thy (2) *hair,*
Thou other gold-bound brow, is like the first:——
A third is like the former.

(1) The expression of Macbeth, that the *crown sears* his eye-balls, is taken from the method formerly practised of destroying the sight of captives or competitors, by holding a burning bason before the eye, which dried up its humidity. Whence the Italian, *abacinare,* to *blind.*

(2) As Macbeth expected to see a train of kings, and was only inquiring from what race they would proceed, he could not be surprised that the *hair* of the second was *bound with gold,* like that of the first; he was offended only that the second resembled the first, as the first resembled Banquo, and, therefore, said:

——and thy *air,*
Thou other gold-bound brow, is like the first.

NOTE XXXVII.

I will—give to the edge o' th' sword
His wife, his babes, and all unfortunate souls
That *trace him in his line.*—No boasting like a fool:
This deed I'll do before my purpose cool.

[n] Compare the Incantations of the Erichtho of Lucan, the Canidia of Horace, the Cantata of Salvator Rosa, "all' incanto all' incanto," and the Eumenides of Æschylus. The Gothic wildness of Shakespeare's "weird sisters" will thence be better appreciated. Ed.

Both the sense and measure of the third line, which, as it rhymes, ought, according to the practice of this author, to be regular, are, at present, injured by two superfluous syllables, which may easily be removed by reading,

——souls
That trace his line:—No boasting like a fool.

NOTE XXXVIII.

SCENE III.

Rosse. My dearest cousin,
I pray you, school yourself: But for your husband,
He's noble, wise, judicious, and best knows
The fits o' th' time, I dare not speak much further,
But cruel are the times when we are traitors,
And do not know't ourselves, when we (1) *hold rumour*
From what we fear, yet know not what we fear;
But float upon a wild and violent sea,
Each way, and (2) *move.* I'll take my leave of you:
Shall not be long but I'll be here again:
Things at the worst will cease, or else climb upward
To what they were before: my pretty cousin,
Blessing upon you!

(1) ——— When we hold rumour
From what we fear, yet know not what we fear.

The present reading seems to afford no sense; and, therefore, some critical experiments may be properly tried upon it, though, the verses being without any connexion, there is room for suspicion, that some intermediate lines are lost, and that the passage is, therefore, irretrievable. If it be supposed that the fault arises only from the corruption of some words, and that the traces of the true reading are still to be found, the passage may be changed thus:

——when we *bode ruin*
From what we fear, yet know not what we fear.

Or, in a sense very applicable to the occasion of the conference:

———when the *bold, running*
From what they fear, yet know not what they fear.

(2) But float upon a wild and violent sea
Each way, and move.

That he who *floats* upon a *rough sea* must move, is evident, too evident for Shakespeare so emphatically to assert. The line, therefore, is to be written thus:

Each way, and move—I'll take my leave of you.

Rosse is about to proceed, but, finding himself overpowered by his tenderness, breaks off abruptly, for which he makes a short apology, and retires.

NOTE XXXIX.

SCENE IV.

Malcolm. Let us seek out some desolate shade, and there
Weep our sad bosoms empty.
Macduff. Let us rather
Hold fast the mortal sword; and, like good men,
Bestride our *downfal birth-doom:* each new morn,
New widows howl, new orphans cry, new sorrows
Strike heaven on the face, that it resounds
As if it felt with Scotland, and yell'd out
Like syllables of dolour.

He who can discover what is meant by him that earnestly exhorts him to *bestride* his *downfal birth-doom*, is at liberty to adhere to the present text; but those who are willing to confess that such counsel would to them be unintelligible, must endeavour to discover some reading less obscure. It is probable that Shakespeare wrote:

——like good men,
Bestride our *downfall'n birthdom*——

The allusion is to a man from whom something valuable is about to be taken by violence, and who, that he may defend it without encumbrance, lays it on the ground, and stands over it with his weapon in his hand. Our birth-

dom, or birthright, says he, lies on the ground, let us, like men who are to fight for what is dearest to them, not abandon it, but stand over it and defend it. This is a strong picture of obstinate resolution.

Birthdom for *birthright* is formed by the same analogy with *masterdom* in this play, signifying the *privileges* or *rights* of a *master*.

Perhaps it might be *birth-dame* for *mother*; let us stand over our mother that lies bleeding on the ground.

NOTE XL.

Malcolm. Now we'll together; and the *chance of goodness*
Be like our warranted quarrel!

The *chance of goodness*, as it is commonly read, conveys no sense. If there be not some more important errour in the passage, it should, at least, be pointed thus:

——And the chance, of goodness,
Be like our warranted quarrel!

That is, may the event be, of the goodness of heaven, [*pro justicia divina,*] answerable to the cause.

But I am inclined to believe that Shakespeare wrote,

——and the chance, O goodness,
Be like our warranted quarrel!

This some of his transcribers wrote with a small *o*, which another imagined to mean *of*. If we adopt this reading, the sense will be, *and O! thou sovereign goodness, to whom we now appeal, may our fortune answer to our cause.*

NOTE XLI.

ACT V. SCENE III.

Macbeth. Bring me no more reports, let them fly all,
Till Birnam wood remove to Dunsinane,
I cannot taint with fear. What's the boy Malcolm?
Was he not born of woman?————
——fly false thanes,
And mingle with the English epicures.

In the first line of this speech, the proper pauses are not observed in the present editions.

Bring me no more reports—let them fly all—

Tell me not any more of desertions—Let all my subjects leave me—I am safe till, &c.

The reproach of epicurism, on which Mr. Theobald has bestowed a note, is nothing more than a natural invective, uttered by an inhabitant of a barren country, against those who have more opportunities of luxury.

NOTE XLII.

Macbeth. I have liv'd long enough: my *way* of life
Is fall'n into the sear, the yellow leaf.

As there is no relation between the *way of life*, and *fallen into the sear*, I am inclined to think, that the *W* is only an *M* inverted, and that it was originally written, my *May* of life.

I am now passed from the spring to the autumn of my days, but I am without those comforts that should succeed the sprightliness of bloom, and support me in this melancholy season.

NOTE XLIII.

SCENE IV.

Malcolm. 'Tis his main hope:
For where there is *advantage to be given*,
Both more and less have given him the revolt;
And none serve with him but constrained things,
Whose hearts are absent too.

The impropriety of the expresssion *advantage to be given*, instead of *advantage given*, and the disagreeable repetition of the word *given* in the next line incline me to read,

——where there is *a 'vantage* to be *gone*,
Both more and less have given him the revolt.

Advantage or *'vantage*, in the time of Shakespeare, signified *opportunity*.

More and less is the same with *greater and less*. So in the interpolated Mandeville, a book of that age, there is a chapter of India the more and the less.

NOTE XLIV.

SCENE V.

Macbeth.——Wherefore was that cry?
Seyton. The queen, my lord, is dead.
Macbeth. She should (1) have died hereafter;
There would have been a time for such a *word.*
To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow,
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,
To the last syllable of (2) recorded time;
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!
Life's but a walking shadow.——

(1) She should have died hereafter,
There would have been a time for such a *word.*

This passage has very justly been suspected of being corrupt. It is not apparent for what *word* there would have been a *time*, and that there would or would not be a *time* for any *word*, seems not a consideration of importance sufficient to transport Macbeth into the following exclamation. I read, therefore:

She should have died hereafter,
There would have been a time for—such a *world!*—
To-morrow, &c.

It is a broken speech, in which only part of the thought is expressed, and may be paraphrased thus: The queen is dead. *Macbeth.* Her death should have been deferred to some more peaceful hour; had she lived longer, *there would at length have been a time for* the honours due to her as a queen, and that respect which I owe her for her fidelity and love. Such is the *world*—such is the condition of human life, that we always think *to-morrow* will be happier

than to-day; but to-morrow and to-morrow steals over us unenjoyed and unregarded, and we still linger in the same expectation to the moment appointed for our end. All these days, which have thus passed away, have sent multitudes of fools to the grave, who were engrossed by the same dream of future felicity, and, when life was departing from them, were, like me, reckoning on to-morrow.

(2) To the last syllable of recorded time.

Recorded time seems to signify the time fixed in the decrees of heaven for the period of life. The *record* of *futurity* is, indeed, no accurate expression, but as we only know transactions past or present, the language of men affords no term for the volumes of prescience, in which future events may be supposed to be written.

NOTE XLV.

Macbeth. If thou speak'st false,
Upon the next tree shalt thou hang alive,
Till famine cling thee: if thy speech be sooth,
I care not if thou dost for me as much.——
I *pull* in resolution; and begin
To doubt th' equivocation of the fiend,
That lies like truth: " Fear not till Birnam wood
Do come to Dunsinane," and now a wood
Comes toward Dunsinane.

I *pull* in resolution.——

Though this is the reading of all the editions, yet as it is a phrase without either example, elegance, or propriety, it is surely better to read :

I *pall* in resolution.——

I languish in my constancy, my confidence begins to forsake me. It is scarcely necessary to observe how easily *pall* might be changed into *pull* by a negligent writer, or mistaken for it by an unskilful printer.

NOTE XLVI.

SCENE VIII.

Siward Had I as many sons as I have hairs,
I would not wish them to a fairer death:
And so his knell is knoll'd.

This incident is thus related from Henry of Huntingdon, by Camden, in his Remains, from which our author probably copied it.

When Siward, the martial Earl of Northumberland, understood that his son, whom he had sent in service against the Scotchmen, was slain, he demanded whether his wound were in the fore part or hinder part of his body. When it was answered in the fore part, he replied, "I am right glad; neither wish I any other death to me or mine."

AFTER the foregoing pages were printed, the late edition of Shakespeare, ascribed to Sir Thomas Hanmer, fell into my hands; and it was, therefore, convenient for me to delay the publication of my remarks, till I had examined whether they were not anticipated by similar observations, or precluded by better. I, therefore, read over this tragedy, but found that the editor's apprehension is of a cast so different from mine, that he appears to find no difficulty in most of those passages which I have represented as unintelligible, and has, therefore, passed smoothly over them, without any attempt to alter or explain them.

Some of the lines with which I had been perplexed, have been, indeed, so fortunate as to attract his regard; and it is not without all the satisfaction which it is usual to express on such occasions, that I find an entire agreement between us in substituting [see Note II.] *quarrel* for *quarry*, and in explaining the adage of the *cat*, [Note XVII.] But this pleasure is, like most others, known only to be regretted; for I have the unhappiness to find no such conformity with regard to any other passage.

The line which I have endeavoured to amend, Note XI.

is, likewise, attempted by the new editor, and is, perhaps, the only passage in the play in which he has not submissively admitted the emendations of foregoing criticks. Instead of the common reading,

——Doing every thing
Safe towards your love and honour,

he has published,

——Doing every thing
Shap'd towards your love and honour.

This alteration, which, like all the rest attempted by him, the reader is expected to admit, without any reason alleged in its defence, is, in my opinion, more plausible than that of Mr. Theobald: whether it is right, I am not to determine.

In the passage which I have altered in Note XL. an emendation is, likewise, attempted in the late edition, where, for,

——and the chance *of* goodness
Be like our warranted quarrel,

is substituted—and the chance *in* goodness—whether with more or less elegance, dignity, and propriety, than the reading which I have offered, I must again decline the province of deciding.

Most of the other emendations which he has endeavoured, whether with good or bad fortune, are too trivial to deserve mention. For surely the weapons of criticism ought not to be blunted against an editor, who can imagine that he is restoring poetry, while he is amusing himself with alterations like these: for,

——This is the sergeant,
Who like a good and hardy soldier fought;
——This is the sergeant, who
Like a *right* good and hardy soldier fought.

For,

——Dismay'd not this
Our captains Macbeth and Banquo?—Yes;

——Dismay'd not this
Our captains *brave* Macbeth and Banquo?—Yes.

Such harmless industry may, surely, be forgiven, if it cannot be praised: may he, therefore, never want a monosyllable, who can use it with such wonderful dexterity.

Rumpatur quisquis rumpitur invidia!

The rest of this edition I have not read, but, from the little that I have seen, think it not dangerous to declare that, in my opinion, its pomp recommends it more than its accuracy. There is no distinction made between the ancient reading, and the innovations of the editor; there is no reason given for any of the alterations which are made; the emendations of former criticks are adopted without any acknowledgment, and few of the difficulties are removed which have hitherto embarrassed the readers of Shakespeare.

I would not, however, be thought to insult the editor, nor to censure him with too much petulance, for having failed in little things, of whom I have been told, that he excels in greater. But I may, without indecency, observe, that no man should attempt to teach others what he has never learned himself; and that those who, like Themistocles, have studied the arts of policy, and "can teach a small state how to grow great," should, like him, disdain to labour in trifles, and consider petty accomplishments as below their ambition [o].

[o] These excellent observations extorted praise from the supercilious Warburton himself. In the Preface to his Shakespeare, published two years after the appearance of Johnson's anonymous pamphlet, he thus alludes to it: "As to all those things which have been published under the titles of Essays, Remarks, Observations, &c. on Shakespeare, (if you except some critical notes on Macbeth, given as a specimen of a projected edition, and written, as appears, by a man of parts and genius,) the rest are absolutely below a serious notice." According to Boswell, Johnson ever retained a grateful remembrance of this distinguished compliment; "He praised me," said he, "at a time when praise was of value to me." Boswell, I.—Johnson affixed to this tract, proposals for a Shakespeare in 10 volumes, 18mo. price, to subscribers, 1*l.* 5*s.* in sheets, half-a-guinea of which moderate sum was to be deposited at the time of subscription. The following fuller proposals were published in 1756; but they were not realized until the lapse of nine years from that period. Boswell, I.—Ed.

PROPOSALS

FOR PRINTING THE

DRAMATICK WORKS

OF

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE.

PRINTED IN THE YEAR 1756.

WHEN the works of Shakespeare are, after so many editions, again offered to the publick, it will, doubtless, be inquired, why Shakespeare stands in more need of critical assistance than any other of the English writers, and what are the deficiencies of the late attempts, which another editor may hope to supply?

The business of him that republishes an ancient book is, to correct what is corrupt, and to explain what is obscure. To have a text corrupt in many places, and in many doubtful, is, among the authors that have written since the use of types, almost peculiar to Shakespeare. Most writers, by publishing their own works, prevent all various readings, and preclude all conjectural criticism. Books, indeed, are sometimes published after the death of him who produced them; but they are better secured from corruption than these unfortunate compositions. They subsist in a single copy, written or revised by the author; and the faults of the printed volume can be only faults of one descent.

But of the works of Shakespeare the condition has been far different: he sold them, not to be printed, but to be played. They were immediately copied for the actors, and multiplied by transcript after transcript, vitiated by

the blunders of the penman, or changed by the affectation of the player; perhaps enlarged to introduce a jest, or mutilated to shorten the representation; and printed at last without the concurrence of the author, without the consent of the proprietor, from compilations made by chance or by stealth out of the separate parts written for the theatre; and thus thrust into the world surreptitiously and hastily, they suffered another depravation from the ignorance and negligence of the printers, as every man who knows the state of the press, in that age, will readily conceive.

It is not easy for invention to bring together so many causes concurring to vitiate the text. No other author ever gave up his works to fortune and time with so little care: no books could be left in hands so likely to injure them, as plays frequently acted, yet continued in manuscript: no other transcribers were likely to be so little qualified for their task as those who copied for the stage, at a time when the lower ranks of the people were universally illiterate: no other editions were made from fragments so minutely broken, and so fortuitously reunited; and in no other age was the art of printing in such unskilful hands[p].

With the causes of corruption that make the revisal of Shakespeare's dramatick pieces necessary, may be enumerated the causes of obscurity, which may be partly imputed to his age, and partly to himself.

When a writer outlives his contemporaries, and remains almost the only unforgotten name of a distant time, he is

[p] It is not true, that the plays of this author were more incorrectly printed than those of any of his cotemporaries: for in the plays of Massinger, Marlowe, Marston, Fletcher, and others, as many errors may be found. It is not true, that the art of printing was in no other age in such unskilful hands. Nor is it true, in the latitude in which it is stated, that "these plays were printed from compilations made by chance or by stealth, out of the separate parts written for the theatre:" two only of all his dramas, The Merry Wives of Windsor, and King Henry V. appear to have been thus thrust into the world; and of the former it is yet a doubt, whether it is a first sketch, or an imperfect copy. See Malone's Preface throughout. Ed.

necessarily obscure. Every age has its modes of speech, and its cast of thought; which, though easily explained when there are many books to be compared with each other, become sometimes unintelligible and always difficult, when there are no parallel passages that may conduce to their illustration. Shakespeare is the first considerable author of sublime or familiar dialogue in our language. Of the books which he read, and from which he formed his style, some, perhaps, have perished, and the rest are neglected. His imitations are, therefore, unnoted, his allusions are undiscovered, and many beauties, both of pleasantry and greatness, are lost with the objects to which they were united, as the figures vanish when the canvass has decayed.

It is the great excellence of Shakespeare, that he drew his scenes from nature, and from life. He copied the manners of the world, then passing before him, and has more allusions than other poets to the traditions and superstition of the vulgar; which must, therefore, be traced, before he can be understood.

He wrote at a time when our poetical language was yet unformed, when the meaning of our phrases was yet in fluctuation, when words were adopted at pleasure from the neighbouring languages, and while the Saxon was still visibly mingled in our diction. The reader is, therefore, embarrassed at once with dead and with foreign languages, with obsoleteness and innovation. In that age, as in all others, fashion produced phraseology, which succeeding fashion swept away before its meaning was generally known, or sufficiently authorised: and in that age, above all others, experiments were made upon our language, which distorted its combinations, and disturbed its uniformity.

If Shakespeare has difficulties above other writers, it is to be imputed to the nature of his work, which required the use of the common colloquial language, and consequently admitted many phrases allusive, elliptical, and proverbial, such as we speak and hear every hour without

observing them; and of which, being now familiar, we do not suspect that they can ever grow uncouth, or that, being now obvious, they can ever seem remote.

These are the principal causes of the obscurity of Shakespeare; to which might be added the fulness of idea, which might sometimes load his words with more sentiment than they could conveniently convey, and that rapidity of imagination which might hurry him to a second thought before he had fully explained the first. But my opinion is, that very few of his lines were difficult to his audience, and that he used such expressions as were then common, though the paucity of contemporary writers makes them now seem peculiar.

Authors are often praised for improvement, or blamed for innovation, with very little justice, by those who read few other books of the same age. Addison, himself, has been so unsuccessful in enumerating the words with which Milton has enriched our language, as, perhaps, not to have named one of which Milton was the author; and Bentley has yet more unhappily praised him as the introducer of those elisions into English poetry, which had been used from the first essays of versification among us, and which Milton was, indeed, the last that practised.

Another impediment, not the least vexatious to the commentator, is the exactness with which Shakespeare followed his authors. Instead of dilating his thoughts into generalities, and expressing incidents with poetical latitude, he often combines circumstances unnecessary to his main design, only because he happened to find them together. Such passages can be illustrated only by him who has read the same story, in the very book which Shakespeare consulted.

He that undertakes an edition of Shakespeare, has all these difficulties to encounter, and all these obstructions to remove.

The corruptions of the text will be corrected by a careful collation of the oldest copies, by which it is hoped that many restorations may yet be made: at least it will be

necessary to collect and note the variation as materials for future criticks; for it very often happens that a wrong reading has affinity to the right.

In this part all the present editions are apparently and intentionally defective. The criticks did not so much as wish to facilitate the labour of those that followed them. The same books are still to be compared; the work that has been done, is to be done again; and no single edition will supply the reader with a text, on which he can rely, as the best copy of the works of Shakespeare.

The edition now proposed will, at least, have this advantage over others. It will exhibit all the observable varieties of all the copies that can be found; that, if the reader is not satisfied with the editor's determination, he may have the means of choosing better for himself.

Where all the books are evidently vitiated, and collation can give no assistance, then begins the task of critical sagacity: and some changes may well be admitted in a text never settled by the author, and so long exposed to caprice and ignorance. But nothing shall be imposed, as in the Oxford edition, without notice of the alteration; nor shall conjecture be wantonly or unnecessarily indulged.

It has been long found, that very specious emendations do not equally strike all minds with conviction, nor even the same mind, at different times; and, therefore, though, perhaps, many alterations may be proposed as eligible, very few will be obtruded as certain. In a language so ungrammatical as the English, and so licentious as that of Shakespeare, emendatory criticism is always hazardous, nor can it be allowed to any man who is not particularly versed in the writings of that age, and particularly studious of his author's diction. There is danger lest peculiarities should be mistaken for corruptions, and passages rejected as unintelligible, which a narrow mind happens not to understand.

All the former criticks have been so much employed on the corrections of the text, that they have not sufficiently attended to the elucidation of passages obscured by acci-

dent or time. The editor will endeavour to read the books which the author read, to trace his knowledge to its source, and compare his copies with their originals. If, in this part of his design, he hopes to attain any degree of superiority to his predecessors, it must be considered, that he has the advantage of their labours; that, part of the work being already done, more care is naturally bestowed on the other part; and that, to declare the truth, Mr. Rowe and Mr. Pope were very ignorant of the ancient English literature; Dr. Warburton was detained by more important studies; and Mr. Theobald, if fame be just to his memory, considered learning only as an instrument of gain, and made no further inquiry after his author's meaning, when once he had notes sufficient to embellish his page with the expected decorations.

With regard to obsolete or peculiar diction, the editor may, perhaps, claim some degree of confidence, having had more motives to consider the whole extent of our language than any other man from its first formation. He hopes that, by comparing the works of Shakespeare with those of writers who lived at the same time, immediately preceded, or immediately followed him, he shall be able to ascertain his ambiguities, disentangle his intricacies, and recover the meaning of words now lost in the darkness of antiquity.

When, therefore, any obscurity arises from an allusion to some other book, the passage will be quoted. When the diction is entangled, it will be cleared by a paraphrase or interpretation. When the sense is broken by the suppression of part of the sentiment in pleasantry or passion, the connexion will be supplied. When any forgotten custom is hinted, care will be taken to retrieve and explain it. The meaning assigned to doubtful words will be supported by the authorities of other writers, or by parallel passages of Shakespeare himself.

The observation of faults and beauties is one of the duties of an annotator, which some of Shakespeare's editors have attempted, and some have neglected.—For this part

of his task, and for this only, was Mr. Pope eminently and indisputably qualified; nor has Dr. Warburton[q] followed him with less diligence or less success. But I have never observed that mankind was much delighted or improved by their asterisks, commas, or double commas; of which the only effect is, that they preclude the pleasure of judging for ourselves; teach the young and ignorant to decide without principles; defeat curiosity and discernment, by leaving them less to discover; and at last show the opinion of the critick, without the reasons on which it was founded, and without affording any light by which it may be examined.

The editor, though he may less delight his own vanity, will, probably, please his reader more, by supposing him equally able with himself to judge of beauties and faults, which require no previous acquisition of remote knowledge. A description of the obvious scenes of nature, a representation of general life, a sentiment of reflection or experience, a deduction of conclusive arguments, a forcible eruption of effervescent passion, are to be considered as proportionate to common apprehension, unassisted by critical officiousness; since, to conceive them, nothing more is requisite than acquaintance with the general state of the world, and those faculties which he must almost bring with him who would read Shakespeare.

But when the beauty arises from some adaptation of the sentiment to customs worn out of use, to opinions not universally prevalent, or to any accidental or minute particularity, which cannot be supplied by common understanding, or common observation, it is the duty of a commentator to lend his assistance.

The notice of beauties and faults, thus limited, will make no distinct part of the design, being reducible to the explanation of some obscure passages.

The editor does not, however, intend to preclude him-

[q] See how this respectful reference to his labours was rewarded by this "meek and modest ecclesiastic" in his Letters, 4to. 272, 273. Also Edinburgh Review for January, 1809.

self from the comparison of Shakespeare's sentiments or expression with those of ancient or modern authors, or from the display of any beauties not obvious to the students of poetry; for, as he hopes to leave his author better understood, he wishes, likewise, to procure him more rational approbation.

The former editors have affected to slight their predecessors: but in this edition all that is valuable will be adopted from every commentator, that posterity may consider it as including all the rest, and exhibiting whatever is hitherto known of the great father of the English drama.

PREFACE

TO

SHAKESPEARE.

PUBLISHED IN THE YEAR 1768[r].

THAT praises are without reason lavished on the dead, and that the honours due only to excellence are paid to antiquity, is a complaint likely to be always continued by those, who, being able to add nothing to truth, hope for eminence from the heresies of paradox; or those, who, being forced by disappointment upon consolatory expedients, are willing to hope from posterity what the present age refuses, and flatter themselves that the regard, which is yet denied by envy, will be at last bestowed by time.

Antiquity, like every other quality that attracts the notice of mankind, has undoubtedly votaries that reverence it, not from reason, but from prejudice. Some seem to admire indiscriminately whatever has been long preserved, without considering that time has sometimes co-operated with chance; all, perhaps, are more willing to honour past than present excellence; and the mind contemplates genius through the shades of age, as the eye surveys the sun through artificial opacity. The great contention of criticism is to find the faults of the moderns, and the beauties of the ancients. While an author is yet living, we estimate his powers by his worst performance, and when he is dead we rate them by his best.

[r] Dr. Johnson's Preface first appeared in 1765. Malone's Shakespeare, i. 198. and Boswell's Life of Johnson, i.

To works, however, of which the excellence is not absolute and definite, but gradual and comparative; to works not raised upon principles demonstrative and scientifick, but appealing wholly to observation and experience, no other test can be applied than length of duration and continuance of esteem. What mankind have long possessed they have often examined and compared; and if they persist to value the possession, it is because frequent comparisons have confirmed opinion in its favour. As, among the works of nature, no man can properly call a river deep, or a mountain high, without the knowledge of many mountains, and many rivers; so, in the productions of genius, nothing can be styled excellent till it has been compared with other works of the same kind. Demonstration immediately displays its power, and has nothing to hope or fear from the flux of years; but works tentative and experimental must be estimated by their proportion to the general and collective ability of man, as it is discovered in a long succession of endeavours. Of the first building that was raised, it might be, with certainty, determined that it was round or square; but whether it was spacious or lofty must have been referred to time. The Pythagorean scale of numbers was at once discovered to be perfect; but the poems of Homer we yet know not to transcend the common limits of human intelligence, but by remarking, that nation after nation, and century after century, has been able to do little more than transpose his incidents, new name his characters, and paraphrase his sentiments.

The reverence due to writings that have long subsisted, arises, therefore, not from any credulous confidence in the superiour wisdom of past ages, or gloomy persuasion of the degeneracy of mankind, but is the consequence of acknowledged and indubitable positions, that what has been longest known has been most considered, and what is most considered is best understood.

The poet, of whose works I have undertaken the revision, may now begin to assume the dignity of an ancient, and claim the privilege of established fame and prescrip-

tive veneration. He has long outlived his century, the term commonly fixed as the test of literary merit[*]. Whatever advantages he might once derive from personal allusions, local customs, or temporary opinions, have for many years been lost; and every topick of merriment, or motive of sorrow, which the modes of artificial life afforded him, now only obscure the scenes which they once illuminated. The effects of favour and competition are at an end; the tradition of his friendships and his enmities has perished; his works support no opinion with arguments, nor supply any faction with invectives; they can neither indulge vanity, nor gratify malignity; but are read without any other reason than the desire of pleasure, and are, therefore, praised only as pleasure is obtained; yet, thus unassisted by interest or passion, they have passed through variations of taste and changes of manners, and, as they devolved from one generation to another, have received new honours at every transmission.

But because human judgment, though it be gradually gaining upon certainty, never becomes infallible; and approbation, though long continued, may yet be only the approbation of prejudice or fashion; it is proper to inquire, by what peculiarities of excellence Shakespeare has gained, and kept the favour of his countrymen.

Nothing can please many, and please long, but just representations of general nature. Particular manners can be known to few, and, therefore, few only can judge how nearly they are copied. The irregular combinations of fanciful invention may delight awhile, by that novelty of which the common satiety of life sends us all in quest; but the pleasures of sudden wonder are soon exhausted, and the mind can only repose on the stability of truth.

Shakespeare is, above all writers, at least above all modern writers, the poet of nature; the poet that holds up to his readers a faithful mirror of manners and of life. His characters are not modified by the customs of particular places, unpractised by the rest of the world; by the

[*] Est vetus atque probus, centum qui perficit annos. Hor. Ep. II. 1. v. 39.

peculiarities of studies or professions, which can operate but upon small numbers; or by the accidents of transient fashions or temporary opinions: they are the genuine progeny of common humanity, such as the world will always supply, and observation will always find. His persons act and speak by the influence of those general passions and principles by which all minds are agitated, and the whole system of life is continued in motion. In the writings of other poets a character is too often an individual: in those of Shakespeare it is commonly a species.

It is from this wide extension of design that so much instruction is derived. It is this which fills the plays of Shakespeare with practical axioms and domestick wisdom. It was said of Euripides, that every verse was a precept; and it may be said of Shakespeare, that from his works may be collected a system of civil and economical prudence. Yet his real power is not shown in the splendour of particular passages, but by the progress of his fable, and the tenour of his dialogue; and he that tries to recommend him by select quotations, will succeed like the pedant in Hierocles, who, when he offered his house to sale, carried a brick in his pocket as a specimen.

It will not easily be imagined how much Shakespeare excels in accommodating his sentiments to real life, but by comparing him with other authors. It was observed of the ancient schools of declamation, that the more diligently they were frequented, the more was the student disqualified for the world, because he found nothing there which he should ever meet in any other place. The same remark may be applied to every stage but that of Shakespeare. The theatre, when it is under any other direction, is peopled by such characters as were never seen, conversing in a language which was never heard, upon topicks which will never arise in the commerce of mankind. But the dialogue of this author is often so evidently determined by the incident which produces it, and is pursued with so much ease and simplicity, that it seems

scarcely to claim the merit of fiction, but to have been gleaned, by diligent selection, out of common conversation and common occurrences.

Upon every other stage the universal agent is love, by whose power all good and evil is distributed, and every action quickened or retarded. To bring a lover, a lady, and a rival into the fable; to entangle them in contradictory obligations, perplex them with oppositions of interest, and harass them with violence of desires inconsistent with each other; to make them meet in rapture, and part in agony; to fill their mouths with hyperbolical joy and outrageous sorrow; to distress them as nothing human ever was distressed; to deliver them as nothing human ever was delivered; is the business of a modern dramatist. For this, probability is violated, life is misrepresented, and language is depraved. But love is only one of many passions; and, as it has no great influence upon the sum of life[t], it has little operation in the dramas of a poet, who caught his ideas from the living world, and exhibited only what he saw before him. He knew that any other passion, as it was regular or exorbitant, was a cause of happiness or calamity.

Characters thus ample and general were not easily discriminated and preserved, yet, perhaps, no poet ever kept his personages more distinct from each other. I will not say, with Pope, that every speech may be assigned to the proper speaker, because many speeches there are

[t] With all respect for our great critic's memory we must maintain, that love has the *greatest* influence on the sum of life: and every popular tale or poem derives its main charm and power of pleasing from the incidents of this universal passion. Other passions have, undoubtedly, their sway, but love, when it does prevail, like Aaron's rod, swallows up every feeling beside. It is one thing to introduce the fulsome *badinage* of compliment with which French tragedy abounds, and another to exhibit the

> ——————" very ecstacy of love:
> Whose violent property foredoes itself,
> And leads the will to desperate undertakings,
> *As oft as any passion under heaven,*
> That does afflict our natures."—
>
> HAMLET. Act ii. Sc. i.

which have nothing characteristical; but, perhaps, though some may be equally adapted to every person, it will be difficult to find any that can be properly transferred from the present possessor to another claimant. The choice is right, when there is reason for choice.

Other dramatists can only gain attention by hyperbolical or aggravated characters, by fabulous and unexampled excellence or depravity, as the writers of barbarous romances invigorated the reader by a giant and a dwarf; and he that should form his expectations of human affairs from the play, or from the tale, would be equally deceived. Shakespeare has no heroes; his scenes are occupied only by men, who act and speak as the reader thinks that he should himself have spoken or acted on the same occasion: even where the agency is supernatural, the dialogue is level with life. Other writers disguise the most natural passions and most frequent incidents; so that he who contemplates them in the book will not know them in the world: Shakespeare approximates the remote, and familiarizes the wonderful; the event which he represents will not happen, but, if it were possible, its effects would, probably, be such as he has assigned[u]; and it may be said, that he has not only shown human nature as it acts in real exigencies, but as it would be found in trials, to which it cannot be exposed.

This, therefore, is the praise of Shakespeare, that his drama is the mirror of life; that he who has mazed his imagination, in following the phantoms which other writers raise up before him, may here be cured of his delirious ecstacies, by reading human sentiments in human language, by scenes from which a hermit may estimate the transactions of the world, and a confessor predict the progress of the passions.

[u] Quærit quod nusquam est gentium, reperit tamen.
Facit illud verisimile, quod mendacium est.
PLAUTI PSEUDOLUS, Act i. Sc. 4.

Ficta voluptatis causa, sint proxima veris. HOR. ARS POET. 338.

See too the celebrated passage of Shakespeare himself—Midsummer-night's Dream, Act v. Sc. 1; and Idler, 84.—Ed.

His adherence to general nature has exposed him to the censure of criticks, who form their judgments upon narrower principles. Dennis and Rymer think his Romans not sufficiently Roman; and Voltaire censures his kings as not completely royal[x]. Dennis is offended, that Menenius, a senator of Rome, should play the buffoon; and Voltaire, perhaps, thinks decency violated when the Danish usurper is represented as a drunkard. But Shakespeare always makes nature predominate over accident; and, if he preserves the essential character, is not very careful of distinctions superinduced and adventitious. His story requires Romans or kings, but he thinks only on men. He knew that Rome, like every other city, had men of all dispositions; and, wanting a buffoon, he went into the senate-house for that which the senate-house would certainly have afforded him. He was inclined to show an usurper and a murderer, not only odious, but despicable; he, therefore, added drunkenness to his other qualities, knowing that kings love wine like other men, and that wine exerts its natural power upon kings. These are the petty cavils of petty minds; a poet overlooks the casual distinction of country and condition, as a painter, satisfied with the figure, neglects the drapery.

The censure which he has incurred by mixing comick and tragick scenes, as it extends to all his works, deserves more consideration. Let the fact be first stated, and then examined.

Shakespeare's plays are not, in the rigorous or critical sense, either tragedies or comedies, but compositions of a distinct kind; exhibiting the real state of sublunary nature, which partakes of good and evil, joy and sorrow, mingled with endless variety of proportion and innumerable modes

[x] The judgment of French poets on these points may be inferred from the tenour of Boileau's admonitions:

Gardez donc de donner, ainsi que dans Clélie,
L'air ni l'esprit françois à l'antique Italie;
Et, sous des noms romains faisant notre portrait,
Peindre Caton galant, et Brutus dameret.

Art Poétique, iii.—Ed.

of combination; and expressing the course of the world, in which the loss of one is the gain of another; in which, at the same time, the reveller is hasting to his wine, and the mourner burying his friend; in which the malignity of one is sometimes defeated by the frolick of another; and many mischiefs and many benefits are done and hindered without design.

Out of this chaos of mingled purposes and casualties the ancient poets, according to the laws which custom had prescribed, selected some the crimes of men, and some their absurdities; some the momentous vicissitudes of life, and some the lighter occurrences; some the terrours of distress and some the gaieties of prosperity. Thus rose the two modes of imitation, known by the names of *tragedy* and *comedy*, compositions intended to promote different ends by contrary means, and considered as so little allied, that I do not recollect among the Greeks or Romans a single writer who attempted both[y].

Shakespeare has united the powers of exciting laughter and sorrow, not only in one mind, but in one composition. Almost all his plays are divided between serious and ludicrous characters, and, in the successive evolutions of the design, sometimes produce seriousness and sorrow, and sometimes levity and laughter.

That this is a practice contrary to the rules of criticism will be readily allowed; but there is always an appeal open from criticism to nature. The end of writing is to

[y] The critic must, when he wrote this, have forgotten the Cyclops of Euripides, and also the fact, that when an Athenian dramatist brought out his *three* tragedies at the Dionysiac festival, he added, as a fourth, a sort of farce; a specimen of which Schlegel considers the Cyclops. Mr. Twining, in his amusing and instructive notes on Aristotle's Poetics, refers to the drunken jollity of Hercules in the Alcestis, and to the ludicrous dialogue between Ulysses and Minerva, in the first scene of the Ajax of Sophocles, as instances of Greek tragi-comedy. We may add the Electra of Euripides; for if the poet did not intend to burlesque the rules of tragic composition in many of the scenes of that play, and to make his audience laugh, he calculated on more dull gravity in Athens, than we are accustomed to give that city of song the credit for. The broad ridicule which Aristophanes casts against the tragedians is not half so laughable.

instruct; the end of poetry is to instruct by pleasing. That the mingled drama may convey all the instruction of tragedy or comedy cannot be denied, because it includes both in its alternations of exhibition, and approaches nearer than either to the appearance of life, by showing how great machinations and slender designs may promote or obviate one another, and the high and the low co-operate in the general system by unavoidable concatenation.

It is objected, that by this change of scenes the passions are interrupted in their progression, and that the principal event, being not advanced by a due gradation of preparatory incidents, wants, at last, the power to move, which constitutes the perfection of dramatick poetry. This reasoning is so specious, that it is received as true even by those who, in daily experience, feel it to be false. The interchanges of mingled scenes seldom fail to produce the intended vicissitudes of passion. Fiction cannot move so much, but that the attention may be easily transferred; and though it must be allowed that pleasing melancholy may be sometimes interrupted by unwelcome levity, yet let it be considered, likewise, that melancholy is often not pleasing, and that the disturbance of one man may be the relief of another; that different auditors have different habitudes; and that, upon the whole, all pleasure consists in variety.

The players, who, in their edition, divided our author's works into comedies, histories and tragedies, seem not to have distinguished the three kinds by any very exact or definite ideas.

An action which ended happily to the principal persons, however serious or distressful through its intermediate incidents, in their opinion, constituted a comedy. This idea of a comedy continued long amongst us; and plays were written, which, by changing the catastrophe, were tragedies to-day, and comedies to-morrow[z].

[z] Thus, says Downes the Prompter, p. 22: "The tragedy of Romeo and Juliet was made some time after [1662] into a tragi-comedy, by Mr. James

Tragedy was not in those times a poem of more general dignity or elevation than comedy; it required only a calamitous conclusion, with which the common criticism of that age was satisfied, whatever lighter pleasure it afforded in its progress.

History was a series of actions, with no other than chronological succession, independent of each other, and without any tendency to introduce or regulate the conclusion. It is not always very nicely distinguished from tragedy. There is not much nearer approach to unity of action in the tragedy of Anthony and Cleopatra, than in the history of Richard the second. But a history might be continued through many plays; as it had no plan, it had no limits.

Through all these denominations of the drama, Shakespeare's mode of composition is the same; an interchange of seriousness and merriment, by which the mind is softened at one time, and exhilarated at another. But whatever be his purpose, whether to gladden or depress, or to conduct the story, without vehemence or emotion, through tracts of easy and familiar dialogue, he never fails to attain his purpose; as he commands us, we laugh or mourn, or sit silent with quiet expectation, in tranquillity without indifference.

When Shakespeare's plan is understood, most of the criticisms of Rymer and Voltaire vanish away. The play of Hamlet is opened, without impropriety, by two centinels; Iago bellows at Brabantio's window, without injury to the scheme of the play, though in terms which a modern audience would not easily endure; the character of Polonius is seasonable and useful; and the Gravediggers themselves may be heard with applause.

Shakespeare engaged in dramatick poetry with the world open before him; the rules of the ancients were yet known to few; the publick judgment was unformed; he had no example of such fame as might force him upon

Howard, he preserving Romeo and Juliet alive; so that when the tragedy was revived again, 'twas played alternately, tragical one day, and tragi-comical another, for several days together. STEEVENS.

imitation, nor criticks of such authority as might restrain his extravagance: he, therefore, indulged his natural disposition, and his disposition, as Rymer has remarked, led him to comedy. In tragedy he often writes, with great appearance of toil and study, what is written at last with little felicity; but, in his comick scenes, he seems to produce, without labour, what no labour can improve. In tragedy he is always struggling after some occasion to be comick; but in comedy he seems to repose, or to luxuriate, as in a mode of thinking congenial to his nature. In his tragick scenes there is always something wanting, but his comedy often surpasses expectation or desire. His comedy pleases by the thoughts and the language, and his tragedy, for the greater part, by incident and action. His tragedy seems to be skill, his comedy to be instinct[a].

The force of his comick scenes has suffered little diminution from the changes made by a century and a half, in manners or in words. As his personages act upon principles arising from genuine passion, very little modified by particular forms, their pleasures and vexations are communicable to all times and to all places; they are natural, and, therefore, durable; the adventitious peculiarities of personal habits are only superficial dies, bright and pleasing for a little while, yet soon fading to a dim tinct, without any remains of former lustre; but the discriminations of true passion are the colours of nature; they pervade the whole mass, and can only perish with the body that exhibits them. The accidental compositions of heterogeneous modes are dissolved by the chance that combined them; but the uniform simplicity of primitive qualities neither admits increase, nor suffers decay. The sand heaped by one flood is scattered by another, but the rock always continues in its place. The stream of time, which is continually washing the dissoluble fabricks of other

[a] This opinion is controverted, and its effects deplored, by Dr. J. Warton, in a note to Malone's Shakespeare, i. p. 71.—Ed.

poets, passes, without injury, by the adamant of Shakespeare[b].

If there be, what I believe there is, in every nation, a style which never becomes obsolete, a certain mode of phraseology so consonant and congenial to the analogy and principles of its respective language, as to remain settled and unaltered; this style is probably to be sought in the common intercourse of life, among those who speak only to be understood, without ambition of elegance. The polite are always catching modish innovations, and the learned depart from established forms of speech, in hope of finding or making better; those who wish for distinction forsake the vulgar, when the vulgar is right; but there is a conversation above grossness and below refinement, where propriety resides, and where this poet seems to have gathered his comick dialogue. He is, therefore, more agreeable to the ears of the present age than any other author equally remote, and among his other excellencies deserves to be studied as one of the original masters of our language.

These observations are to be considered not as unexceptionably constant, but as containing general and predominant truth. Shakespeare's familiar dialogue is affirmed to be smooth and clear, yet not wholly without ruggedness or difficulty; as a country may be eminently fruitful, though it has spots unfit for cultivation: his characters are praised as natural, though their sentiments are sometimes forced, and their actions improbable; as the earth upon the whole is spherical, though its surface is varied with protuberances and cavities.

[b] Dr. Drake conceives that Dr. Wolcot was indebted to the above noble passage for the *prima stamina* of the following stanza:

Thus, while I wond'ring pause o'er Shakespeare's page
I mark, in visions of delight, the sage
High o'er the wrecks of man who stands sublime,
A column in the melancholy waste,
(Its cities humbled, and its glories past,)
Majestic 'mid the solitude of time.—Ed.

Shakespeare with his excellencies has likewise faults, and faults sufficient to obscure and overwhelm any other merit. I shall show them in the proportion in which they appear to me, without envious malignity or superstitious veneration. No question can be more innocently discussed than a dead poet's pretensions to renown; and little regard is due to that bigotry which sets candour higher than truth.

His first defect is that to which may be imputed most of the evil in books or in men. He sacrifices virtue to convenience, and is so much more careful to please than to instruct, that he seems to write without any moral purpose. From his writings, indeed, a system of social duty may be selected, for he that thinks reasonably must think morally; but his precepts and axioms drop casually from him; he makes no just distribution of good or evil, nor is always careful to show in the virtuous a disapprobation of the wicked; he carries his persons indifferently through right and wrong, and, at the close, dismisses them without further care, and leaves their examples to operate by chance. This fault the barbarity of his age cannot extenuate; for it is always a writer's duty to make the world better, and justice is a virtue independent on time or place.

The plots are often so loosely formed, that a very slight consideration may improve them, and so carelessly pursued, that he seems not always fully to comprehend his own design. He omits opportunities of instructing or delighting, which the train of his story seems to force upon him, and apparently rejects those exhibitions which would be more affecting, for the sake of those which are more easy.

It may be observed, that in many of his plays the latter part is evidently neglected. When he found himself near the end of his work, and in view of his reward, he shortened the labour to snatch the profit. He, therefore, remits his efforts where he should most vigorously exert them, and his catastrophe is improbably produced or imperfectly represented.

He had no regard to distinction of time or place, but gives to one age or nation, without scruple, the customs, institutions, and opinions of another, at the expense not only of likelihood, but of possibility. These faults Pope has endeavoured, with more zeal than judgment, to transfer to his imagined interpolators. We need not wonder to find Hector quoting Aristotle, when we see the loves of Theseus and Hippolyta combined with the Gothick mythology of fairies. Shakespeare, indeed, was not the only violator of chronology, for in the same age Sidney, who wanted not the advantages of learning, has, in his Arcadia, confounded the pastoral with the feudal times, the days of innocence, quiet, and security, with those of turbulence, violence, and adventure[c].

In his comick scenes he is seldom very successful, when he engages his characters in reciprocations of smartness and contests of sarcasm; their jests are commonly gross, and their pleasantry licentious; neither his gentlemen nor his ladies have much delicacy, nor are sufficiently distinguished from his clowns by any appearance of refined manners. Whether he represented the real conversation of his time is not easy to determine; the reign of Elizabeth is commonly supposed to have been a time of stateliness, formality, and reserve; yet, perhaps, the relaxations of that severity were not very elegant[d]. There must, however, have been always some modes of gaiety preferable to others, and a writer ought to choose the best.

[c] The poets and painters before and of Shakespeare's time were all guilty of the same fault. The former "combined the Gothic mythology of fairies" with the fables and traditions of Greek and Roman lore; while the latter dressed out the heroes of antiquity in the arms and costume of their own day. The grand front of Rouen cathedral affords ample and curious illustration of what we state. Mr. Steevens, in his Shakespeare, adds, "that in Arthur Hall's version of the fourth Iliad, Juno says to Jupiter:"

"The time will come that *Totnam French* shall turn."

And in the tenth Book we hear of "The Bastile": "Lemster wool," and "The Byble."

[d] The relaxations of "England's queen" with her maids of honour were not, if we may credit the existing memoirs of her court, precisely such as modern fastidiousness would assign to the "fair vestal throned by the west."

In tragedy his performance seems constantly to be worse, as his labour is more. The effusions of passion, which exigence forces out, are, for the most part, striking and energetick; but whenever he solicits his invention, or strains his faculties, the offspring of his throes is tumour, meanness, tediousness, and obscurity.

In narration he affects a disproportionate pomp of diction, and a wearisome train of circumlocution, and tells the incident imperfectly in many words, which might have been more plainly delivered in few. Narration in dramatick poetry is naturally tedious, as it is unanimated and inactive, and obstructs the progress of the action; it should, therefore, always be rapid, and enlivened by frequent interruption. Shakespeare found it an incumbrance, and instead of lightening it by brevity, endeavoured to recommend it by dignity and splendour.

His declamations or set speeches are commonly cold and weak, for his power was the power of nature; when he endeavoured, like other tragick writers, to catch opportunities of amplification, and instead of inquiring what the occasion demanded, to show how much his stores of knowledge could supply, he seldom escapes without the pity or resentment of his reader.

It is incident to him to be now and then entangled with an unwieldy sentiment, which he cannot well express, and will not reject; he struggles with it a while, and, if it continues stubborn, comprises it in words such as occur, and leaves it to be disentangled and evolved by those who have more leisure to bestow upon it.

Not that always where the language is intricate, the thought is subtile, or the image always great where the line is bulky; the equality of words to things is very often neglected, and trivial sentiments and vulgar ideas disappoint the attention, to which they are recommended by sonorous epithets and swelling figures.

But the admirers of this great poet have most reason to complain when he approaches nearest to his highest excellence, and seems fully resolved to sink them in dejection,

and mollify them with tender emotions, by the fall of greatness, the danger of innocence, or the crosses of love. What he does best, he soon ceases to do. He is not long soft and pathetick without some idle conceit, or contemptible equivocation. He no sooner begins to move, than he counteracts himself; and terrour and pity, as they are rising in the mind, are checked and blasted by sudden frigidity.

A quibble is to Shakespeare, what luminous vapours are to the traveller; he follows it at all adventures it is sure to lead him out of his way, and sure to ingulf him in the mire. It has some malignant power over his mind, and its fascinations are irresistible. Whatever be the dignity or profundity of his disquisitions, whether he be enlarging knowledge or exalting affection, whether he be amusing attention with incidents, or enchaining it in suspense, let but a quibble spring up before him, and he leaves his work unfinished. A quibble is the golden apple for which he will always turn aside from his career, or stoop from his elevation. A quibble, poor and barren as it is, gave him such delight, that he was content to purchase it, by the sacrifice of reason, propriety and truth. A quibble was to him the fatal Cleopatra for which he lost the world, and was content to lose it.

It will be thought strange, that, in enumerating the defects of this writer, I have not yet mentioned his neglect of the unities; his violation of those laws which have been instituted and established by the joint authority of poets and of criticks.

For his other deviations from the art of writing, I resign him to critical justice, without making any other demand in his favour, than that which must be indulged to all human excellence; that his virtues be rated with his failings: but, from the censure which this irregularity may bring upon him, I shall, with due reverence to that learning which I must oppose, adventure to try how I can defend him.

His histories, being neither tragedies nor comedies, are not subject to any of their laws; nothing more is necessary

to all the praise which they expect, than that the changes of action be so prepared as to be understood; that the incidents be various and affecting, and the characters consistent, natural and distinct. No other unity is intended, and, therefore, none is to be sought.

In his other works he has well enough preserved the unity of action. He has not, indeed, an intrigue regularly perplexed and regularly unravelled: he does not endeavour to hide his design only to discover it, for this is seldom the order of real events, and Shakespeare is the poet of nature: but his plan has commonly what Aristotle requires, a beginning, a middle, and an end; one event is concatenated with another, and the conclusion follows by easy consequence. There are, perhaps, some incidents that might be spared, as in other poets there is much talk that only fills up time upon the stage; but the general system makes gradual advances, and the end of the play is the end of expectation.

To the unities of time and place he has shown no regard; and, perhaps, a nearer view of the principles on which they stand will diminish their value, and withdraw from them the veneration which, from the time of Corneille, they have generally received, by discovering that they have given more trouble to the poet, than pleasure to the auditor.

The necessity of observing the unities of time and place arises from the supposed necessity of making the drama credible. The criticks hold it impossible, that an action of months or years can be possibly believed to pass in three hours; or that the spectator can suppose himself to sit in the theatre, while ambassadors go and return between distant kings, while armies are levied and towns besieged, while an exile wanders and returns, or till he whom they saw courting his mistress, shall lament the untimely fall of his son. The mind revolts from evident falsehood, and fiction loses its force when it departs from the resemblance of reality.

From the narrow limitation of time necessarily arises

the contraction of place. The spectator, who knows that he saw the first act at Alexandria, cannot suppose that he sees the next at Rome, at a distance to which not the dragons of Medea could, in so short a time, have transported him; he knows with certainty that he has not changed his place; and he knows that place cannot change itself; that what was a house cannot become a plain; that what was Thebes can never be Persepolis.

Such is the triumphant language with which a critick exults over the misery of an irregular poet, and exults commonly without resistance or reply. It is time, therefore, to tell him, by the authority of Shakespeare, that he assumes, as an unquestionable principle, a position, which, while his breath is forming it into words, his understanding pronounces to be false. It is false, that any representation is mistaken for reality; that any dramatick fable in its materiality was ever credible, or, for a single moment, was ever credited.

The objection arising from the impossibility of passing the first hour at Alexandria, and the next at Rome, supposes, that when the play opens, the spectator really imagines himself at Alexandria, and believes that his walk to the theatre has been a voyage to Egypt, and that he lives in the days of Anthony and Cleopatra. Surely he that imagines this may imagine more. He that can take the stage at one time for the palace of the Ptolemies, may take it in half an hour for the promontory of Actium. Delusion, if delusion be admitted, has no certain limitation; if the spectator can be once persuaded, that his old acquaintance are Alexander and Cæsar, that a room illuminated with candles is the plain of Pharsalia, or the bank of Granicus, he is in a state of elevation above the reach of reason, or of truth, and from the heights of empyrean poetry, may despise the circumscriptions of terrestrial nature. There is no reason why a mind thus wandering in ecstacy should count the clock, or why an hour should not be a century in that calenture of the brains that can make the stage a field.

The truth is, that the spectators are always in their senses, and know, from the first act to the last, that the stage is only a stage, and that the players are only players. They come to hear a certain number of lines recited with just gesture and elegant modulation. The lines relate to some action, and an action must be in some place; but the different actions that complete a story may be in places very remote from each other; and where is the absurdity of allowing that space to represent first Athens, and then Sicily, which was always known to be neither Sicily nor Athens, but a modern theatre?

By supposition, as place is introduced, time may be extended; the time required by the fable elapses, for the most part, between the acts; for, of so much of the action as is represented, the real and poetical duration is the same. If, in the first act, preparations for war against Mithridates are represented to be made in Rome, the event of the war may, without absurdity, be represented, in the catastrophe, as happening in Pontus; we know that there is neither war, nor preparation for war; we know that we are neither in Rome nor Pontus; that neither Mithridates nor Lucullus are before us. The drama exhibits successive imitations of successive actions; and why may not the second imitation represent an action that happened years after the first, if it be so connected with it, that nothing but time can be supposed to intervene? Time is, of all modes of existence, most obsequious to the imagination; a lapse of years is as easily conceived as a passage of hours. In contemplation we easily contract the time of real actions, and, therefore, willingly permit it to be contracted when we only see their imitation.

It will be asked, how the drama moves, if it is not credited. It is credited with all the credit due to a drama. It is credited, whenever it moves, as a just picture of a real original; as representing to the auditor what he would himself feel, if he were to do or suffer what is there feigned to be suffered or to be done. The reflection that strikes the heart is not, that the evils before us are real evils, but that they are evils to which we ourselves may

be exposed. If there be any fallacy, it is not that we fancy the players, but that we fancy ourselves unhappy for a moment; but we rather lament the possibility than suppose the presence of misery, as a mother weeps over her babe, when she remembers that death may take it from her. The delight of tragedy proceeds from our consciousness of fiction; if we thought murders and treasons real, they would please no more.

Imitations produce pain or pleasure, not because they are mistaken for realities, but because they bring realities to mind. When the imagination is recreated by a painted landscape, the trees are not supposed capable to give us shade, or the fountains coolness; but we consider how we should be pleased with such fountains playing beside us, and such woods waving over us. We are agitated in reading the history of Henry the fifth, yet no man takes his book for the field of Agincourt. A dramatick exhibition is a book recited with concomitants that increase or diminish its effect. Familiar comedy is often more powerful on the theatre, than in the page; imperial tragedy is always less. The humour of Petruchio may be heightened by grimace; but what voice or what gesture can hope to add dignity or force to the soliloquy of Cato?

A play read, affects the mind like a play acted. It is, therefore, evident, that the action is not supposed to be real; and it follows, that between the acts a longer or shorter time may be allowed to pass, and that no more account of space or duration is to be taken by the auditor of a drama, than by the reader of a narrative, before whom may pass in an hour the life of a hero, or the revolutions of an empire.

Whether Shakespeare knew the unities, and rejected them by design, or deviated from them by happy ignorance, it is, I think, impossible to decide, and useless to inquire. We may reasonably suppose, that, when he rose to notice, he did not want the counsels and admonitions of scholars and criticks, and that he, at last, deliberately persisted in a practice, which he might have begun by chance. As nothing is essential to the fable but unity of action, and

as the unities of time and place arise evidently from false assumptions, and, by circumscribing the extent of the drama, lessen its variety, I cannot think it much to be lamented, that they were not known by him, or not observed: nor, if such another poet could arise, should I very vehemently reproach him, that his first act passed at Venice, and his next in Cyprus. Such violations of rules merely positive, become the comprehensive genius of Shakespeare, and such censures are suitable to the minute and slender criticism of Voltaire.

> Non usque adeo permiscuit imis
> Longus summa dies, ut non, si voce Metelli
> Serventur leges, malint a Cæsare tolli.

Yet when I speak thus slightly of dramatick rules, I cannot but recollect how much wit and learning may be produced against me; before such authorities I am afraid to stand, not that I think the present question one of those that are to be decided by mere authority, but because it is to be suspected, that these precepts have not been so easily received, but for better reasons than I have yet been able to find. The result of my inquiries, in which it would be ludicrous to boast of impartiality, is, that the unities of time and place are not essential to a just drama; that though they may sometimes conduce to pleasure, they are always to be sacrificed to the nobler beauties of variety and instruction; and that a play written with nice observation of critical rules, is to be contemplated as an elaborate curiosity, as the product of superfluous and ostentatious art, by which is shown, rather what is possible, than what is necessary.

He that, without diminution of any other excellence, shall preserve all the unities unbroken, deserves the like applause with the architect, who shall display all the orders of architecture in a citadel, without any deduction from its strength; but the principal beauty of a citadel is to exclude the enemy; and the greatest graces of a play are to copy nature, and instruct life.

Perhaps, what I have here not dogmatically but deliberately written, may recall the principles of the drama to a new examination. I am almost frighted at my own temerity; and when I estimate the fame and the strength of those that maintain the contrary opinion, am ready to sink down in reverential silence; as Æneas withdrew from the defence of Troy, when he saw Neptune shaking the wall, and Juno heading the besiegers.

Those whom my arguments cannot persuade to give their approbation to the judgment of Shakespeare, will easily, if they consider the condition of his life, make some allowance for his ignorance.

Every man's performances, to be rightly estimated, must be compared with the state of the age in which he lived, and with his own particular opportunities; and though to the reader a book be not worse or better for the circumstances of the author, yet, as there is always a silent reference of human works to human abilities, and as the inquiry, how far man may extend his designs, or how high he may rate his native force, is of far greater dignity than in what rank we shall place any particular performance, curiosity is always busy to discover the instruments, as well as to survey the workmanship, to know how much is to be ascribed to original powers, and how much to casual and adventitious help. The palaces of Peru or Mexico were certainly mean and incommodious habitations, if compared to the houses of European monarchs; yet who could forbear to view them with astonishment, who remembered that they were built without the use of iron?

The English nation, in the time of Shakespeare, was yet struggling to emerge from barbarity. The philology of Italy had been transplanted hither in the reign of Henry the eighth; and the learned languages had been successfully cultivated by Lilly, Linacre, and More; by Pole, Cheke, and Gardiner; and afterwards by Smith, Clerk, Haddon, and Ascham. Greek was now taught to boys in the principal schools; and those who united elegance

with learning, read, with great diligence, the Italian and Spanish poets. But literature was yet confined to professed scholars, or to men and women of high rank. The publick was gross and dark; and to be able to read and write, was an accomplishment still valued for its rarity.

Nations, like individuals, have their infancy. A people newly awakened to literary curiosity, being yet unacquainted with the true state of things, knows not how to judge of that which is proposed as its resemblance. Whatever is remote from common appearances is always welcome to vulgar, as to childish credulity; and of a country unenlightened by learning, the whole people is the vulgar. The study of those who then aspired to plebeian learning was laid out upon adventures, giants, dragons, and enchantments. The Death of Arthur was the favourite volume.

The mind, which has feasted on the luxurious wonders of fiction, has no taste of the insipidity of truth. A play, which imitated only the common occurrences of the world, would, upon the admirers of Palmerin and Guy of Warwick, have made little impression; he that wrote for such an audience was under the necessity of looking round for strange events and fabulous transactions; and that incredibility, by which maturer knowledge is offended, was the chief recommendation of writings to unskilful curiosity.

Our author's plots are generally borrowed from novels; and it is reasonable to suppose, that he chose the most popular, such as were read by many, and related by more; for his audience could not have followed him through the intricacies of the drama, had they not held the thread of the story in their hands.

The stories, which we now find only in remoter authors, were, in his time, accessible and familiar. The fable of As You Like It, which is supposed to be copied from Chaucer's Gamelyn, was a little pamphlet of those times; and old Mr. Cibber remembered the tale of Hamlet in plain English prose, which the criticks have now to seek in Saxo Grammaticus.

His English histories he took from English chronicles and English ballads; and as the ancient writers were made known to his countrymen by versions, they supplied him with new subjects; he dilated some of Plutarch's lives into plays, when they had been translated by North.

His plots, whether historical or fabulous, are always crowded with incidents, by which the attention of a rude people was more easily caught than by sentiment or argumentation; and such is the power of the marvellous, even over those who despise it, that every man finds his mind more strongly seized by the tragedies of Shakespeare than of any other writer: others please us by particular speeches; but he always makes us anxious for the event, and has, perhaps, excelled all but Homer in securing the first purpose of a writer, by exciting restless and unquenchable curiosity, and compelling him that reads his work to read it through.

The shows and bustle with which his plays abound have the same original. As knowledge advances, pleasure passes from the eye to the ear, but returns, as it declines, from the ear to the eye. Those to whom our author's labours were exhibited had more skill in pomps or processions than in poetical language, and, perhaps, wanted some visible and discriminated events, as comments on the dialogue. He knew how he should most please; and whether his practice is more agreeable to nature, or whether his example has prejudiced the nation, we still find that on our stage something must be done as well as said, and inactive declamation is very coldly heard, however musical or elegant, passionate or sublime.

Voltaire expresses his wonder, that our author's extravagancies are endured by a nation, which has seen the tragedy of Cato. Let him be answered, that Addison speaks the language of poets, and Shakespeare of men. We find in Cato innumerable beauties, which enamour us of its author, but we see nothing that acquaints us with human sentiments or human actions; we place it with the fairest and the noblest progeny which judgment propagates

by conjunction with learning; but Othello is the vigorous and vivacious offspring of observation impregnated by genius. Cato affords a splendid exhibition of artificial and fictitious manners, and delivers just and noble sentiments, in diction easy, elevated, and harmonious, but its hopes and fears communicate no vibration to the heart; the composition refers us only to the writer; we pronounce the name of Cato, but we think on Addison.

The work of a correct and regular writer is a garden accurately formed and diligently planted, varied with shades, and scented with flowers; the composition of Shakespeare is a forest, in which oaks extend their branches, and pines tower in the air, interspersed sometimes with weeds and brambles, and sometimes giving shelter to myrtles and to roses; filling the eye with awful pomp, and gratifying the mind with endless diversity. Other poets display cabinets of precious rarities, minutely finished, wrought into shape, and polished into brightness. Shakespeare opens a mine which contains gold and diamonds in unexhaustible plenty, though clouded by incrustations, debased by impurities, and mingled with a mass of meaner minerals.

It has been much disputed, whether Shakespeare owed his excellence to his own native force, or whether he had the common helps of scholastick education, the precepts of critical science, and the examples of ancient authors.

There has always prevailed a tradition, that Shakespeare wanted learning, that he had no regular education, nor much skill in the dead languages. Jonson, his friend, affirms, that "he had small Latin and less Greek;" who, besides that he had no imaginable temptation to falsehood, wrote at a time when the character and acquisitions of Shakespeare were known to multitudes. His evidence ought, therefore, to decide the controversy, unless some testimony of equal force could be opposed [e].

Some have imagined, that they have discovered deep learning in many imitations of old writers; but the examples which I have known urged were drawn from books

[e] A very full and satisfactory essay on the learning of Shakespeare, may be found in Mr. Malone's Edition of Shakespeare, i. 300.

translated in his time; or were such easy coincidences of thought, as will happen to all who consider the same subjects; or such remarks on life, or axioms of morality, as float in conversation, and are transmitted through the world in proverbial sentences.

I have found it remarked, that, in this important sentence, "Go before, I'll follow," we read a translation of, *I præ, sequar*. I have been told, that when Caliban, after a pleasing dream, says, "I cry'd to sleep again," the author imitates Anacreon[f], who had, like every other man, the same wish on the same occasion.

There are a few passages which may pass for imitations, but so few, that the exception only confirms the rule; he obtained them from accidental quotations, or by oral communication, and as he used what he had, would have used more if he had obtained it.

The Comedy of Errors is confessedly taken from the Menæchmi of Plautus[g]; from the only play of Plautus which was then in English. What can be more probable, than that he who copied that, would have copied more; but that those which were not translated were inaccessible?

Whether he knew the modern languages is uncertain. That his plays have some French scenes proves but little; he might easily procure them to be written, and probably, even though he had known the language in the common degree, he could not have written it without assistance. In the story of Romeo and Juliet, he is observed to have followed the English translation, where it deviates from the Italian: but this, on the other part, proves nothing against his knowledge of the original. He was to copy,

[f] Μεμονωμένος δ' ὁ τλήμων
Πάλιν ἤθελον καθεύδειν. Anac. 8.

[g] The Comedy of Errors, which has been partly taken by some wretched playwright from the Menæchmi of Plautus, is intolerably stupid: that it may occasionally display the touch of Shakespeare, cannot be denied; but these *purpurei panni* are lamentably infrequent; and, to adopt the language of Mr. Stevens, "that the entire play was no work of his, is an opinion which (as Benedick says) fire cannot melt out of me; I will die in it at the stake." Dr. Drake's Literary Life of Johnson.—Ed.

not what he knew himself, but what was known to his audience.

It is most likely that he had learned Latin sufficiently to make him acquainted with construction, but that he never advanced to an easy perusal of the Roman authors. Concerning his skill in modern languages, I can find no sufficient ground of determination; but as no imitations of French or Italian authors have been discovered, though the Italian poetry was then high in esteem, I am inclined to believe, that he read little more than English, and chose for his fables only such tales as he found translated.

That much knowledge is scattered over his works is very justly observed by Pope; but it is often such knowledge as books did not supply. He that will understand Shakespeare, must not be content to study him in the closet; he must look for his meaning sometimes among the sports of the field, and sometimes among the manufactures of the shop.

There is, however, proof enough that he was a very diligent reader; nor was our language then so indigent of books, but that he might very liberally indulge his curiosity without excursion into foreign literature. Many of the Roman authors were translated, and some of the Greek[b]; the Reformation had filled the kingdom with theological learning; most of the topicks of human disquisition had found English writers; and poetry had been cultivated, not only with diligence, but success. This was a stock of knowledge sufficient for a mind so capable of appropriating and improving it.

But the greater part of his excellence was the product of his own genius. He found the English stage in a state of the utmost rudeness; no essays, either in tragedy or comedy, had appeared, from which it could be discovered to what degree of delight either one or other might be carried. Neither character nor dialogue were yet under-

[b] A list of these translations may be seen in Malone's Shakespeare, i. 371. It was originally drawn up by Mr. Steevens.—Ed.

stood. Shakespeare may be truly said to have introduced them both amongst us, and in some of his happier scenes to have carried them both to the utmost height.

By what gradations of improvement he proceeded, is not easily known; for the chronology of his works is yet unsettled. Rowe is of opinion, that "perhaps we are not to look for his beginning, like those of other writers, in his least perfect works; art had so little, and nature so large a share in what he did, that for aught I know," says he, "the performances of his youth, as they were the most vigorous, were the best." But the power of nature is only the power of using to any certain purpose the materials which diligence procures, or opportunity supplies. Nature gives no man knowledge, and, when images are collected by study and experience, can only assist in combining or applying them. Shakespeare, however favoured by nature, could impart only what he had learned; and, as he must increase his ideas, like other mortals, by gradual acquisition, he, like them, grew wiser, as he grew older, could display life better, as he knew it more, and instruct with more efficacy, as he was himself more amply instructed.

There is a vigilance of observation and accuracy of distinction which books and precepts cannot confer; from this almost all original and native excellence proceeds. Shakespeare must have looked upon mankind with perspicacity, in the highest degree curious and attentive. Other writers borrow their characters from preceding writers, and diversify them only by the accidental appendages of present manners; the dress is a little varied, but the body is the same. Our author had both matter and form to provide; for, except the characters of Chaucer, to whom I think he is not much indebted, there were no writers in English, and, perhaps, not many in other modern languages, which showed life in its native colours.

The contest about the original benevolence or malignity of man had not yet commenced. Speculation had not yet attempted to analyze the mind, to trace the passions to

their sources, to unfold the seminal principles of vice and virtue, or sound the depths of the heart for the motives of action. All those inquiries, which from that time that human nature became the fashionable study, have been made sometimes with nice discernment, but often with idle subtilty, were yet unattempted. The tales, with which the infancy of learning was satisfied, exhibited only the superficial appearances of action, related the events, but omitted the causes, and were formed for such as delighted in wonders rather than in truth. Mankind was not then to be studied in the closet; he that would know the world, was under the necessity of gleaning his own remarks, by mingling as he could in its business and amusements.

Boyle congratulated himself upon his high birth, because it favoured his curiosity, by facilitating his access. Shakespeare had no such advantage: he came to London a needy adventurer, and lived for a time by very mean employments. Many works of genius and learning have been performed in states of life that appear very little favourable to thought or to inquiry; so many, that he who considers them is inclined to think that he sees enterprize and perseverance predominating over all external agency, and bidding help and hindrance vanish before them. The genius of Shakespeare was not to be depressed by the weight of poverty, nor limited by the narrow conversation to which men in want are inevitably condemned; the encumbrances of his fortune were shaken from his mind, "as dewdrops from a lion's mane".

Though he had so many difficulties to encounter, and so little assistance to surmount them, he has been able to obtain an exact knowledge of many modes of life, and many casts of native dispositions; to vary them with great multiplicity; to mark them by nice distinctions; and to show them in full view by proper combinations. In this part of his performances he had none to imitate, but has himself been imitated by all succeeding writers; and it may be doubted, whether from all his successors more maxims of

theoretical knowledge, or more rules of practical prudence, can be collected, than he alone has given to his country.

Nor was his attention confined to the actions of men; he was an exact surveyor of the inanimate world; his descriptions have always some peculiarities, gathered by contemplating things as they really exist. It may be observed, that the oldest poets of many nations preserve their reputation, and that the following generations of wit, after a short celebrity, sink into oblivion. The first, whoever they be, must take their sentiments and descriptions immediately from knowledge; the resemblance is, therefore, just, their descriptions are verified by every eye, and their sentiments acknowledged by every breast. Those whom their fame invites to the same studies, copy partly them and partly nature, till the books of one age gain such authority, as to stand in the place of nature to another, and imitation, always deviating a little, becomes at last capricious and casual. Shakespeare, whether life or nature be his subject, shows plainly that he has seen with his own eyes; he gives the image which he receives, not weakened or distorted by the intervention of any other mind; the ignorant feel his representations to be just, and the learned see that they are complete.

Perhaps it would not be easy to find any author, except Homer, who invented so much as Shakespeare, who so much advanced the studies which he cultivated, or effused so much novelty upon his age or country. The form, the characters, the language, and the shows of the English drama are his. "He seems," says Dennis, "to have been the very original of our English tragical harmony, that is, the harmony of blank verse, diversified often by dissyllable and trisyllable terminations. For the diversity distinguishes it from heroick harmony, and by bringing it nearer to common use makes it more proper to gain attention, and more fit for action and dialogue. Such verse we make when we are writing prose; we make such verse in common conversation.[i]"

[i] See Dryden in the Epistle Dedicatory to his Rival Ladies.—Ed.

I know not whether this praise is rigorously just. The dissyllable termination, which the critick rightly appropriates to the drama, is to be found, though, I think, not in Gorboduc, which is confessedly before our author; yet in Hieronymo[k] of which the date is not certain, but which there is reason to believe, at least, as old as his earliest plays. This, however, is certain, that he is the first who taught either tragedy or comedy to please, there being no theatrical piece of any older writer, of which the name is known, except to antiquaries and collectors of books, which are sought because they are scarce, and would not have been scarce, had they been much esteemed.

To him we must ascribe the praise, unless Spenser may divide it with him, of having first discovered to how much smoothness and harmony the English language could be softened. He has speeches, perhaps, sometimes scenes, which have all the delicacy of Rowe, without his effeminacy. He endeavours, indeed, commonly to strike by the force and vigour of his dialogue, but he never executes his purpose better, than when he tries to sooth by softness.

Yet it must be at last confessed, that as we owe every thing to him, he owes something to us; that, if much of his praise is paid by perception and judgment, much is, likewise, given by custom and veneration. We fix our eyes upon his graces, and turn them from his deformities, and endure in him what we should in another loathe or despise. If we endured without praising, respect for the father of our drama might excuse us; but I have seen, in the book of some modern critick, a collection of anomalies, which show that he has corrupted language by every mode of depravation, but which his admirer has accumulated as a monument of honour.

He has scenes of undoubted and perpetual excellence; but, perhaps, not one play, which, if it were now exhibited as the work of a contemporary writer, would be heard to

[k] It appears, from the induction of Ben Jonson's "Bartholomew Fair," to have been acted before the year 1590.—Steevens.

the conclusion. I am, indeed, far from thinking that his works were wrought to his own ideas of perfection; when they were such as would satisfy the audience, they satisfied the writer. It is seldom that authors, though more studious of fame than Shakespeare, rise much above the standard of their own age; to add a little to what is best will always be sufficient for present praise; and those who find themselves exalted into fame, are willing to credit their encomiasts, and to spare the labour of contending with themselves.

It does not appear, that Shakespeare thought his works worthy of posterity, that he levied any ideal tribute upon future times, or had any further prospect, than of present popularity and present profit. When his plays had been acted, his hope was at an end; he solicited no addition of honour from the reader. He, therefore, made no scruple to repeat the same jests in many dialogues, or to entangle different plots by the same knot of perplexity; which may be at least forgiven him, by those who recollect that of Congreve's four comedies, two are concluded by a marriage in a mask, by a deception, which, perhaps, never happened, and which, whether likely or not, he did not invent.

So careless was this great poet of future fame, that, though he retired to ease and plenty, while he was yet little *declined into the vale of years*, before he could be disgusted with fatigue, or disabled by infirmity, he made no collection of his works, nor desired to rescue those that had been already published from the depravations that obscured them, or secure to the rest a better destiny, by giving them to the world in their genuine state.

Of the plays which bear the name of Shakespeare in the late editions, the greater part were not published till about seven years after his death; and the few which appeared in his life are apparently thrust into the world without the care of the author, and, therefore, probably without his knowledge.

Of all the publishers, clandestine or professed, the neg-

ligence and unskilfulness has, by the late revisers, been sufficiently shown. The faults of all are, indeed, numerous and gross, and have not only corrupted many passages, perhaps, beyond recovery, but have brought others into suspicion, which are only obscured by obsolete phraseology, or by the writer's unskilfulness and affectation. To alter is more easy than to explain, and temerity is a more common quality than diligence. Those who saw that they must employ conjecture to a certain degree, were willing to indulge it a little further. Had the author published his own works, we should have sat quietly down to disentangle his intricacies, and clear his obscurities; but now we tear what we cannot loose, and eject what we happen not to understand.

The faults are more than could have happened without the concurrence of many causes. The style of Shakespeare was in itself ungrammatical, perplexed, and obscure; his works were transcribed for the players by those who may be supposed to have seldom understood them; they were transmitted by copiers equally unskilful, who still multiplied errours; they were, perhaps, sometimes mutilated by the actors, for the sake of shortening the speeches; and were at last printed without correction of the press[1].

In this state they remained, not, as Dr. Warburton supposes, because they were unregarded, but because the editor's art was not yet applied to modern languages, and our ancestors were accustomed to so much negligence of English printers, that they could very patiently endure it. At last an edition was undertaken by Rowe; not because a poet was to be published by a poet, for Rowe seems to have thought very little on correction or explanation; but that our author's works might appear like those of his fraternity, with the appendages of a life and recommendatory preface. Rowe has been clamorously blamed for not per-

[1] The errors of the prompter's books of the present day excite the violent invective of Mr. Steevens, in his notes on Johnson's Preface.—Ed.

forming what he did not undertake; and it is time that justice be done him, by confessing, that, though he seems to have had no thought of corruption beyond the printer's errours, yet he has made many emendations, if they were not made before, which his successors have received without acknowledgment, and which, if they had produced them, would have filled pages and pages with censures of the stupidity by which the faults were committed, with displays of the absurdities which they involved, with ostentatious expositions of the new reading, and self-congratulations on the happiness of discovering it.

As of the other editors I have preserved the prefaces, I have likewise borrowed the author's life from Rowe, though not written with much elegance or spirit; it relates, however, what is now to be known, and, therefore, deserves to pass through all succeeding publications.

The nation had been for many years content enough with Mr. Rowe's performance, when Mr. Pope made them acquainted with the true state of Shakespeare's text, showed that it was extremely corrupt, and gave reason to hope that there were means of reforming it. He collated the old copies, which none had thought to examine before, and restored many lines to their integrity; but, by a very compendious criticism, he rejected whatever he disliked, and thought more of amputation than of cure.

I know not why he is commended by Dr. Warburton for distinguishing the genuine from the spurious plays. In this choice he exerted no judgment of his own; the plays which he received were given by Hemings and Condel, the first editors; and those which he rejected, though, according to the licentiousness of the press in those times, they were printed during Shakespeare's life, with his name, had been omitted by his friends, and were never added to his works before the edition of 1664, from which they were copied by the later printers.

This was a work which Pope seems to have thought unworthy of his abilities, being not able to suppress his contempt of *the dull duty of an editor*. He understood but

half his undertaking. The duty of a collator is, indeed, dull, yet, like other tedious tasks, is very necessary; but an emendatory critick would ill discharge his duty, without qualities very different from dulness. In perusing a corrupted piece, he must have before him all possibilities of meaning, with all possibilities of expression. Such must be his comprehension of thought, and such his copiousness of language. Out of many readings possible, he must be able to select that which best suits with the state, opinions, and modes of language prevailing in every age, and with his author's particular cast of thought, and turn of expression. Such must be his knowledge, and such his taste. Conjectural criticism demands more than humanity possesses, and he that exercises it with most praise, has very frequent need of indulgence. Let us now be told no more of the dull duty of an editor.

Confidence is the common consequence of success. They whose excellence of any kind has been loudly celebrated, are ready to conclude that their powers are universal. Pope's edition fell below his own expectations, and he was so much offended when he was found to have left any thing for others to do, that he passed the latter part of his life in a state of hostility with verbal criticism.

I have retained all his notes, that no fragment of so great a writer may be lost; his preface, valuable alike for elegance of composition and justness of remark, and containing a general criticism on his author, so extensive that little can be added, and so exact that little can be disputed, every editor has an interest to suppress, but that every reader would demand its insertion.

Pope was succeeded by Theobald, a man of narrow comprehension, and small acquisitions, with no native and intrinsick splendour of genius, with little of the artificial light of learning, but zealous for minute accuracy, and not negligent in pursuing it. He collated the ancient copies, and rectified many errours. A man so anxiously scrupulous might have been expected to do more, but what little he did was commonly right.

In his reports of copies and editions he is not to be trusted without examination. He speaks sometimes indefinitely of copies, when he has only one. In his enumeration of editions, he mentions the two first folios as of high, and the third folio as of middle authority; but the truth is, that the first is equivalent to all others, and that the rest only deviate from it by the printer's negligence. Whoever has any of the folios has all, excepting those diversities which mere reiteration of editions will produce[m]. I collated them all, at the beginning, but afterwards used only the first.

Of his notes I have generally retained those which he retained himself in his second edition, except when they were confuted by subsequent annotators, or were too minute to merit preservation. I have sometimes adopted his restoration of a comma, without inserting the panegyrick in which he celebrated himself for his achievement. The exuberant excrescence of his diction I have often lopped, his triumphant exultations over Pope and Rowe I have sometimes suppressed, and his contemptible ostentation I have frequently concealed; but I have in some places shown him, as he would have shown himself, for the reader's diversion, that the inflated emptiness of some notes may justify or excuse the contraction of the rest.

Theobald, thus weak and ignorant, thus mean and faithless, thus petulant and ostentatious, by the good luck of having Pope for his enemy, has escaped, and escaped alone, with reputation, from this undertaking. So willingly does the world support those who solicit favour against those who command reverence; and so easily is he praised whom no man can envy.

Our author fell then into the hands of Sir Thomas

[m] This assertion is contradicted by Steevens and Malone, as regards the second edition 1632. The former editor says, that it has the advantage of various readings which are not merely such as reiteration of copies will produce. The curious examiner of Shakespeare's text, who possesses the first of these folio editions, ought not to be unfurnished with the second. See Malone's List of Early Editions in his Shakespeare, ii. 656.—Ed.

Hanmer, the Oxford editor, a man, in my opinion, eminently qualified by nature for such studies. He had, what is the first requisite to emendatory criticism, that intuition by which the poet's intention is immediately discovered, and that dexterity of intellect which despatches its work by the easiest means. He had undoubtedly read much; his acquaintance with customs, opinions, and traditions, seems to have been large; and he is often learned without show. He seldom passes what he does not understand, without an attempt to find or to make a meaning, and sometimes hastily makes what a little more attention would have found. He is solicitous to reduce to grammar what he could not be sure that his author intended to be grammatical. Shakespeare regarded more the series of ideas, than of words; and his language, not being designed for the reader's desk, was all that he desired it to be, if it conveyed his meaning to the audience.

Hanmer's care of the metre has been too violently censured. He found the measure reformed in so many passages by the silent labours of some editors, with the silent acquiescence of the rest, that he thought himself allowed to extend a little further the license, which had already been carried so far without reprehension; and, of his corrections in general, it must be confessed, that they are often just, and made commonly with the least possible violation of the text.

But, by inserting his emendations, whether invented or borrowed, into the page, without any notice of varying copies, he has appropriated the labour of his predecessors, and made his own edition of little authority. His confidence indeed, both in himself and others, was too great; he supposes all to be right that was done by Pope and Theobald; he seems not to suspect a critick of fallibility; and it was but reasonable that he should claim what he so liberally granted.

As he never writes without careful inquiry and diligent consideration, I have received all his notes, and believe that every reader will wish for more.

Of the last editor it is more difficult to speak. Respect is due to high place, tenderness to living reputation, and veneration to genius and learning; but he cannot be justly offended at that liberty of which he has himself so frequently given an example, nor very solicitous what is thought of notes, which he ought never to have considered as part of his serious employments, and which, I suppose, since the ardour of composition is remitted, he no longer numbers among his happy effusions.

The original and predominant errour of his commentary is acquiescence in his first thoughts; that precipitation which is produced by consciousness of quick discernment; and that confidence which presumes to do, by surveying the surface, what labour only can perform, by penetrating the bottom. His notes exhibit sometimes perverse interpretations, and sometimes improbable conjectures; he at one time gives the author more profundity of meaning than the sentence admits, and at another discovers absurdities, where the sense is plain to every other reader. But his emendations are likewise often happy and just; and his interpretation of obscure passages learned and sagacious.

Of his notes, I have commonly rejected, those against which the general voice of the publick has exclaimed, or which their own incongruity immediately condemns, and which, I suppose, the author himself would desire to be forgotten. Of the rest, to part I have given the highest approbation, by inserting the offered reading in the text; part I have left to the judgment of the reader, as doubtful, though specious; and part I have censured without reserve, but, I am sure, without bitterness of malice, and, I hope, without wantonness of insult.

It is no pleasure to me, in revising my volumes, to observe how much paper is wasted in confutation. Whoever considers the revolutions of learning, and the various questions of greater or less importance, upon which wit and reason have exercised their powers, must lament the unsuccessfulness of inquiry, and the slow advances of truth, when he reflects that great part of the labour of every

writer is only the destruction of those that went before him. The first care of the builder of a new system, is to demolish the fabricks which are standing. The chief desire of him that comments an author, is to show how much other commentators have corrupted and obscured him. The opinions prevalent in one age, as truths above the reach of controversy, are confuted and rejected in another, and rise again to reception in remoter times. Thus the human mind is kept in motion without progress. Thus sometimes truth and errour, and sometimes contrarieties of errour, take each other's place by reciprocal invasion. The tide of seeming knowledge, which is poured over one generation, retires and leaves another naked and barren; the sudden meteors of intelligence, which for awhile appear to shoot their beams into the regions of obscurity, on a sudden withdraw their lustre, and leave mortals again to grope their way.

These elevations and depressions of renown, and the contradictions to which all improvers of knowledge must for ever be exposed, since they are not escaped by the highest and brightest of mankind, may, surely, be endured with patience by criticks and annotators, who can rank themselves but as the satellites of their authors. How canst thou beg for life, says Homer's hero to his captive, when thou knowest that thou art now to suffer only what must another day be suffered by Achilles?

Dr. Warburton had a name sufficient to confer celebrity on those who could exalt themselves into antagonists, and his notes have raised a clamour too loud to be distinct. His chief assailants are the authors of The Canons of Criticism, and of The Revisal of Shakespeare's Text; of whom one ridicules his errours with airy petulance, suitable enough to the levity of the controversy; the other attacks them with gloomy malignity, as if he were dragging to justice an assassin or incendiary. The one stings like a fly, sucks a little blood, takes a gay flutter, and returns for more; the other bites like a viper, and would be glad to leave inflammations and gangrene behind him.

When I think on one, with his confederates, I remember the danger of Coriolanus, who was afraid that "girls with spits, and boys with stones, should slay him in puny battle;" when the other crosses my imagination, I remember the prodigy in Macbeth:

> A falcon tow'ring in his pride of place,
> Was by a mousing owl hawk'd at and kill'd.

Let me, however, do them justice. One is a wit, and one a scholar[n]. They have both shown acuteness sufficient in the discovery of faults, and have both advanced some probable interpretations of obscure passages; but when they aspire to conjecture and emendation, it appears how falsely we all estimate our own abilities, and the little which they have been able to perform might have taught them more candour to the endeavours of others.

Before Dr. Warburton's edition, Critical Observations on Shakespeare had been published by Mr. Upton[o], a man skilled in languages, and acquainted with books, but who seems to have had no great vigour of genius or nicety of taste. Many of his explanations are curious and useful, but he, likewise, though he professed to oppose the licentious confidence of editors, and adhere to the old copies, is unable to restrain the rage of emendation, though his ardour is ill seconded by his skill. Every cold empirick, when his heart is expanded by a successful experiment, swells into a theorist, and the laborious collator at some unlucky moment frolicks in conjecture.

Critical, historical, and explanatory notes have been, likewise, published upon Shakespeare by Dr. Grey, whose diligent perusal of the old English writers has enabled him to make some useful observations. What he undertook

[n] It is extraordinary that this gentleman should attempt so voluminous a work, as the Revisal of Shakespeare's text, when he tells us in his preface, "he was not so fortunate as to be furnished with either of the folio editions, much less any of the ancient quartos: and even Sir Thomas Hanmer's performance was known to him only by Dr. Warburton's representation."—FARMER.

[o] Republished by him in 1748, after Dr. Warburton's edition, with alterations, &c.—STEEVENS.

he has well enough performed; but as he neither attempts judicial or emendatory criticism, he employs rather his memory than his sagacity. It were to be wished that all would endeavour to imitate his modesty, who have not been able to surpass his knowledge.

I can say, with great sincerity, of all my predecessors, what I hope will hereafter be said of me, that not one has left Shakespeare without improvement; nor is there one to whom I have not been indebted for assistance and information. Whatever I have taken from them, it was my intention to refer to its original author, and it is certain, that what I have not given to another, I believed when I wrote it to be my own. In some, perhaps, I have been anticipated; but if I am ever found to encroach upon the remarks of any other commentators, I am willing that the honour, be it more or less, should be transferred to the first claimant, for his right, and his alone, stands above dispute; the second can prove his pretensions only to himself, nor can himself always distinguish invention, with sufficient certainty, from recollection.

They have all been treated by me with candour, which they have not been careful of observing to one another. It is not easy to discover from what cause the acrimony of a scholiast can naturally proceed. The subjects to be discussed by him are of very small importance; they involve neither property nor liberty; nor favour the interest of sect or party. The various readings of copies, and different interpretations of a passage, seem to be questions that might exercise the wit, without engaging the passions. But whether it be that "small things make mean men proud," and vanity catches small occasions; or that all contrariety of opinion, even in those that can defend it no longer, makes proud men angry; there is often found in commentaries a spontaneous strain of invective and contempt, more eager and venomous than is vented by the most furious controvertist in politicks against those whom he is hired to defame.

Perhaps the lightness of the matter may conduce to the

vehemence of the agency; when the truth to be investigated is so near to inexistence, as to escape attention, its bulk is to be enlarged by rage and exclamation: that to which all would be indifferent in its original state, may attract notice when the fate of a name is appended to it. A commentator has, indeed, great temptations to supply by turbulence what he wants of dignity, to beat his little gold to a spacious surface, to work that to foam which no art or diligence can exalt to spirit.

The notes which I have borrowed or written are either illustrative, by which difficulties are explained; or judicial, by which faults and beauties are remarked; or emendatory, by which depravations are corrected.

The explanations transcribed from others, if I do not subjoin any other interpretation, I suppose commonly to be right, at least I intend by acquiescence to confess, that I have nothing better to propose.

After the labours of all the editors, I found many passages which appeared to me likely to obstruct the greater number of readers, and thought it my duty to facilitate their passage. It is impossible for an expositor not to write too little for some, and too much for others. He can only judge what is necessary by his own experience; and how long soever he may deliberate, will at last explain many lines which the learned will think impossible to be mistaken, and omit many for which the ignorant will want his help. These are censures merely relative, and must be quietly endured. I have endeavoured to be neither superfluously copious, nor scrupulously reserved, and hope that I have made my author's meaning accessible to many, who before were frighted from perusing him, and contributed something to the publick, by diffusing innocent and rational pleasure.

The complete explanation of an author not systematick and consequential, but desultory and vagrant, abounding in casual allusions and light hints, is not to be expected from any single scholiast. All personal reflections, when names are suppressed, must be in a few years irrecover-

ably obliterated; and customs, too minute to attract the notice of law, such as modes of dress, formalities of conversation, rules of visits, disposition of furniture, and practices of ceremony, which naturally find places in familiar dialogue, are so fugitive and unsubstantial, that they are not easily retained or recovered. What can be known will be collected by chance, from the recesses of obscure and obsolete papers, perused commonly with some other view. Of this knowledge every man has some, and none has much; but when an author has engaged the publick attention, those who can add any thing to his illustration, communicate their discoveries, and time produces what had eluded diligence.

To time I have been obliged to resign many passages, which, though I did not understand them, will, perhaps, hereafter be explained; having, I hope, illustrated some, which others have neglected or mistaken, sometimes by short remarks, or marginal directions, such as every editor has added at his will, and often by comments more laborious than the matter will seem to deserve; but that which is most difficult is not always most important, and to an editor nothing is a trifle by which his author is obscured.

The poetical beauties or defects I have not been very diligent to observe. Some plays have more, and some fewer judicial observations, not in proportion to their difference of merit, but because I gave this part of my design to chance and to caprice. The reader, I believe, is seldom pleased to find his opinion anticipated; it is natural to delight more in what we find or make, than in what we receive. Judgment, like other faculties, is improved by practice, and its advancement is hindered by submission to dictatorial decisions, as the memory grows torpid by the use of a table-book. Some initiation is, however, necessary; of all skill, part is infused by precept, and part is obtained by habit; I have, therefore, shown so much as may enable the candidate of criticism to discover the rest.

To the end of most plays I have added short strictures, containing a general censure of faults, or praise of excellence;

in which I know not how much I have concurred with the current opinion; but I have not, by any affectation of singularity, deviated from it. Nothing is minutely and particularly examined, and, therefore, it is to be supposed, that in the plays which are condemned there is much to be praised, and in those which are praised much to be condemned.

The part of criticism in which the whole succession of editors has laboured with the greatest diligence, which has occasioned the most arrogant ostentation, and excited the keenest acrimony, is the emendation of corrupted passages, to which the publick attention, having been first drawn by the violence of the contention between Pope and Theobald, has been continued by the persecution, which, with a kind of conspiracy, has been since raised against all the publishers of Shakespeare.

That many passages have passed in a state of depravation through all the editions, is indubitably certain; of these the restoration is only to be attempted by collation of copies, or sagacity of conjecture. The collator's province is safe and easy, the conjecturer's perilous and difficult. Yet, as the greater part of the plays are extant only in one copy, the peril must not be avoided, nor the difficulty refused.

Of the readings which this emulation of amendment has hitherto produced, some from the labours of every publisher I have advanced into the text; those are to be considered as, in my opinion, sufficiently supported; some I have rejected without mention, as evidently erroneous; some I have left in the notes without censure or approbation, as resting in equipoise between objection and defence; and some, which seemed specious but not right, I have inserted with a subsequent animadversion.

Having classed the observations of others, I was at last to try what I could substitute for their mistakes, and how I could supply their omissions. I collated such copies as I could procure, and wished for more, but have not found the collectors of these rarities very communicative. Of the editions which chance or kindness put into my hands I

have given an enumeration, that I may not be blamed for neglecting what I had not the power to do.

By examining the old copies, I soon found that the later publishers, with all their boasts of diligence, suffered many passages to stand unauthorised, and contented themselves with Rowe's regulation of the text, even where they knew it to be arbitrary, and with a little consideration might have found it to be wrong. Some of these alterations are only the ejection of a word for one that appeared to him more elegant or more intelligible. These corruptions I have often silently rectified; for the history of our language, and the true force of our words, can only be preserved, by keeping the text of authors free from adulteration. Others, and those very frequent, smoothed the cadence, or regulated the measure: on these I have not exercised the same rigour; if only a word was transposed, or a particle inserted or omitted, I have sometimes suffered the line to stand; for the inconstancy of the copies is such, as that some liberties may be easily permitted. But this practice I have not suffered to proceed far, having restored the primitive diction wherever it could for any reason be preferred.

The emendations, which comparison of copies supplied, I have inserted in the text: sometimes, where the improvement was slight, without notice, and sometimes with an account of the reasons of the change.

Conjecture, though it be sometimes unavoidable, I have not wantonly nor licentiously indulged. It has been my settled principle, that the reading of the ancient books is probably true, and, therefore, is not to be disturbed for the sake of elegance, perspicuity, or mere improvement of the sense. For though much credit is not due to the fidelity, nor any to the judgment of the first publishers, yet they who had the copy before their eyes were more likely to read it right, than we, who read it only by imagination. But it is evident that they have often made strange mistakes by ignorance or negligence, and that, therefore, something may be properly attempted by criticism, keeping the middle way between presumption and timidity.

Such criticism I have attempted to practise, and, where any passage appeared inextricably perplexed have endeavoured to discover how it may be recalled to sense, with least violence. But my first labour is, always to turn the old text on every side, and try if there be any interstice, through which light can find its way; nor would Huetius himself condemn me, as refusing the trouble of research, for the ambition of alteration. In this modest industry I have not been unsuccessful. I have rescued many lines from the violations of temerity, and secured many scenes from the inroads of correction. I have adopted the Roman sentiment, that it is more honourable to save a citizen than to kill an enemy, and have been more careful to protect than to attack.

I have preserved the common distribution of the plays into acts, though I believe it to be in almost all the plays void of authority. Some of those which are divided in the later editions have no division in the first folio, and some that are divided in the folio have no division in the preceding copies. The settled mode of the theatre requires four intervals in the play; but few, if any, of our author's compositions can be properly distributed in that manner. An act is so much of the drama as passes without intervention of time, or change of place. A pause makes a new act. In every real, and, therefore, in every imitative action, the intervals may be more or fewer, the restriction of five acts being accidental and arbitrary. This Shakespeare knew, and this he practised; his plays were written, and, at first, printed in one unbroken continuity, and ought now to be exhibited with short pauses, interposed as often as the scene is changed, or any considerable time is required to pass. This method would at once quell a thousand absurdities.

In restoring the author's works to their integrity, I have considered the punctuation as wholly in my power; for what could be their care of colons and commas, who corrupted words and sentences? Whatever could be done by adjusting points, is, therefore, silently performed, in

some plays with much diligence, in others with less; it is hard to keep a busy eye steadily fixed upon evanescent atoms, or a discursive mind upon evanescent truth.

The same liberty has been taken with a few particles, or other words of slight effect. I have sometimes inserted or omitted them without notice. I have done that sometimes, which the other editors have done always, and which, indeed, the state of the text may sufficiently justify.

The greater part of readers, instead of blaming us for passing trifles, will wonder that on mere trifles so much labour is expended, with such importance of debate, and such solemnity of diction. To these I answer with confidence, that they are judging of an art which they do not understand; yet cannot much reproach them with their ignorance, nor promise that they would become in general, by learning criticism, more useful, happier, or wiser.

As I practised conjecture more, I learned to trust it less; and after I had printed a few plays, resolved to insert none of my own readings in the text. Upon this caution I now congratulate myself, for every day increases my doubt of my emendations.

Since I have confined my imagination to the margin, it must not be considered as very reprehensible, if I have suffered it to play some freaks in its own dominion. There is no danger in conjecture, if it be proposed as conjecture; and while the text remains uninjured, those changes may be safely offered, which are not considered, even by him that offers them, as necessary or safe.

If my readings are of little value, they have not been ostentatiously displayed or importunately obtruded. I could have written longer notes, for the art of writing notes is not of difficult attainment. The work is performed, first by railing at the stupidity, negligence, ignorance, and asinine tastelessness of the former editors, and showing, from all that goes before and all that follows, the inelegance and absurdity of the old reading; then by proposing something, which to superficial readers would seem specious, but which the editor rejects with indignation; then by

producing the true reading, with a long paraphrase, and concluding with loud acclamations on the discovery, and a sober wish for the advancement and prosperity of genuine criticism.

All this may be done, and, perhaps, done sometimes without impropriety. But I have always suspected that the reading is right, which requires many words to prove it wrong; and the emendation wrong, that cannot without so much labour appear to be right. The justness of a happy restoration strikes at once, and the moral precept may be well applied to criticism, "quod dubitas ne feceris."

To dread the shore which he sees spread with wrecks, is natural to the sailor. I had before my eye so many critical adventures ended in miscarriage, that caution was forced upon me. I encountered in every page, wit struggling with its own sophistry, and learning confused by the multiplicity of its views. I was forced to censure those whom I admired, and could not but reflect, while I was dispossessing their emendations, how soon the same fate might happen to my own, and how many of the readings which I have corrected may be, by some other editor, defended and established.

> Critics I saw, that others' names efface,
> And fix their own, with labour, in the place;
> Their own, like others, soon their place resign'd,
> Or disappear'd, and left the first behind. POPE.

That a conjectural critick should often be mistaken, cannot be wonderful, either to others or himself, if it be considered, that in his art there is no system, no principal and axiomatical truth that regulates subordinate positions. His chance of errour is renewed at every attempt; an oblique view of the passage, a slight misapprehension of a phrase, a casual inattention to the parts connected, is sufficient to make him not only fail, but fail ridiculously; and when he succeeds best, he produces, perhaps, but one reading of many probable, and he that suggests another will always be able to dispute his claims.

It is an unhappy state, in which danger is hid under plea-

sure. The allurements of emendation are scarcely resistible. Conjecture has all the joy and all the pride of invention, and he that has once started a happy change, is too much delighted to consider what objections may rise against it.

Yet conjectural criticism has been of great use in the learned world; nor is it my intention to depreciate a study, that has exercised so many mighty minds, from the revival of learning to our own age, from the bishop of Aleria[p] to English Bentley. The criticks on ancient authors have, in the exercise of their sagacity, many assistances, which the editor of Shakespeare is condemned to want. They are employed upon grammatical and settled languages, whose construction contributes so much to perspicuity, that Homer has fewer passages unintelligible than Chaucer. The words have not only a known regimen, but invariable quantities, which direct and confine the choice. There are commonly more manuscripts than one; and they do not often conspire in the same mistakes. Yet Scaliger could confess to Salmasius how little satisfaction his emendations gave him: "Illudunt nobis conjecturæ nostræ, quarum nos pudet, posteaquam in meliores codices incidimus." And Lipsius could complain that criticks were making faults, by trying to remove them: "Ut olim vitiis, ita nunc remediis laboratur." And, indeed, where mere conjecture is to be used, the emendations of Scaliger and Lipsius, notwithstanding their wonderful sagacity and erudition, are often vague and disputable, like mine or Theobald's.

Perhaps I may not be more censured for doing wrong, than for doing little; for raising in the publick expectations which at last I have not answered. The expectation of ignorance is indefinite, and that of knowledge is often

[p] John Andreas. He was secretary to the Vatican library during the papacies of Paul the second and Sixtus the fourth. By the former, he was employed to superintend such works as were to be multiplied by the new art of printing, at that time brought into Rome. He published Herodotus, Strabo, Livy, Aulus Gellius, &c. His schoolfellow, Cardinal de Cusa, procured him the bishopric of Accia, a province in Corsica; and Paul the second afterwards appointed him to that of Aleria, in the same island, where he died in 1493. See Fabric. Bibl. Lat. iii. 894, and Steevens, in Malone's Shak. i. 106.

tyrannical. It is hard to satisfy those who know not what to demand, or those who demand by design what they think impossible to be done. I have, indeed, disappointed no opinion more than my own; yet I have endeavoured to perform my task with no slight solicitude. Not a single passage in the whole work has appeared to me corrupt, which I have not attempted to restore; or obscure, which I have not endeavoured to illustrate. In many I have failed, like others; and from many, after all my efforts, I have retreated, and confessed the repulse. I have not passed over, with affected superiority, what is equally difficult to the reader and to myself, but, where I could not instruct him, have owned my ignorance. I might easily have accumulated a mass of seeming learning upon easy scenes; but it ought not to be imputed to negligence, that, where nothing was necessary, nothing has been done, or that, where others have said enough, I have said no more.

Notes are often necessary, but they are necessary evils. Let him, that is yet unacquainted with the powers of Shakespeare, and who desires to feel the highest pleasure that the drama can give, read every play, from the first scene to the last, with utter negligence of all his commentators. When his fancy is once on the wing, let it not stoop at correction or explanation. When his attention is strongly engaged, let it disdain alike to turn aside to the name of Theobald and of Pope. Let him read on through brightness and obscurity, through integrity and corruption; let him preserve his comprehension of the dialogue and his interest in the fable. And when the pleasures of novelty have ceased, let him attempt exactness, and read the commentators.

Particular passages are cleared by notes, but the general effect of the work is weakened. The mind is refrigerated by interruption; the thoughts are diverted from the principal subject; the reader is weary, he suspects not why; and at last throws away the book which he has too diligently studied.

Parts are not to be examined till the whole has been surveyed; there is a kind of intellectual remoteness necessary for the comprehension of any great work in its full design and in its true proportions; a close approach shows the smaller niceties, but the beauty of the whole is discerned no longer.

It is not very grateful to consider how little the succession of editors has added to this author's power of pleasing. He was read, admired, studied, and imitated, while he was yet deformed with all the improprieties which ignorance and neglect could accumulate upon him; while the reading was yet not rectified, nor his allusions understood; yet then did Dryden pronounce "that Shakespeare was the man, who, of all modern and, perhaps, ancient poets, had the largest and most comprehensive soul. All the images of nature were still present to him, and he drew them not laboriously, but luckily: when he describes any thing, you more than see it, you feel it too. Those, who accuse him to have wanted learning, give him the greater commendation: he was naturally learned: he needed not the spectacles of books to read nature; he looked inwards, and found her there. I cannot say he is every where alike; were he so, I should do him injury to compare him with the greatest of mankind. He is many times flat and insipid; his comick wit degenerating into clinches, his serious swelling into bombast. But he is always great when some great occasion is presented to him: no man can say, he ever had a fit subject for his wit, and did not then raise himself as high above the rest of poets,

Quantum lenta solent inter viburna cupressi."

It is to be lamented that such a writer should want a commentary; that his language should become obsolete, or his sentiments obscure. But it is vain to carry wishes beyond the condition of human things; that which must happen to all, has happened to Shakespeare, by accident and time; and more than has been suffered by any other

writer since the use of types[q], has been suffered by him through his own negligence of fame, or, perhaps, by that superiority of mind, which despised its own performances, when it compared them with its powers, and judged those works unworthy to be preserved, which the criticks of following ages were to contend for the fame of restoring and explaining.

Among these candidates of inferiour fame, I am now to stand the judgment of the publick; and wish that I could confidently produce my commentary as equal to the encouragement which I have had the honour of receiving. Every work of this kind is by its nature deficient, and I should feel little solicitude about the sentence, were it to be pronounced only by the skilful and the learned.

[q] See this assertion refuted by examples in a former note.—Ed.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

ON THE

PLAYS OF SHAKESPEARE.

TEMPEST.

It is observed of The Tempest, that its plan is regular; this the author of The Revisal[r] thinks, what I think too, an accidental effect of the story, not intended or regarded by our author. But whatever might be Shakespeare's intention in forming or adopting the plot, he has made it instrumental to the production of many characters, diversified with boundless invention, and preserved with profound skill in nature, extensive knowledge of opinions, and accurate observation of life. In a single drama are here exhibited princes, courtiers, and sailors, all speaking in their real characters. There is the agency of airy spirits, and of an earthly goblin; the operations of magick, the tumults of a storm, the adventures of a desert island, the native effusion of untaught affection, the punishment of guilt, and the final happiness of the pair for whom our passions and reason are equally interested.

TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA.

In this play there is a strange mixture of knowledge and ignorance, of care and negligence. The versification is often excellent, the allusions are learned and just; but

r Mr. Heath, who wrote a Revisal of Shakespeare's text, published in 8vo. circa 1760.

the author conveys his heroes by sea from one inland town to another in the same country; he places the emperour at Milan, and sends his young men to attend him, but never mentions him more; he makes Protheus, after an interview with Silvia, say he has only seen her picture;[a] and, if we may credit the old copies, he has, by mistaking places, left his scenery inextricable. The reason of all this confusion seems to be, that he took his story from a novel, which he sometimes followed, and sometimes forsook, sometimes remembered, and sometimes forgot.

That this play is rightly attributed to Shakespeare, I have little doubt. If it be taken from him, to whom shall it be given? This question may be asked of all the disputed plays, except Titus Andronicus; and it will be found more credible that Shakespeare might sometimes sink below his highest flights, than that any other should rise up to his lowest.

MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR.

Of this play there is a tradition preserved by Mr. Rowe, that it was written at the command of queen Elizabeth, who was so delighted with the character of Falstaff, that she wished it to be diffused through more plays; but, suspecting that it might pall by continued uniformity, directed the poet to diversify his manner, by showing him in love. No task is harder than that of writing to the ideas of another. Shakespeare knew what the queen, if the story be true, seems not to have known, that by any real passion of tenderness, the selfish craft, the careless jollity, and the lazy luxury of Falstaff must have suffered so much abatement,

[a] This is not a blunder of Shakespeare's, but a mistake of Johnson's, who considers the passage alluded to in a more literal sense than the author intended it. Sir Proteus, it is true, had seen Silvia for a few moments; but though he could form from thence some idea of her person, he was still unacquainted with her temper, manners, and the qualities of her mind. He, therefore, considers himself as having seen her picture only. The thought is just and elegantly expressed. So in the Scornful Lady, the elder Loveless says to her, "I was mad once when I loved pictures. For what are *shape* and *colours* else but *pictures*?"—Mason in Malone's Shak. iv. 137.—Ed.

that little of his former cast would have remained. Falstaff could not love, but by ceasing to be Falstaff. He could only counterfeit love, and his professions could be prompted, not by the hope of pleasure, but of money. Thus the poet approached as near as he could to the work enjoined him; yet having, perhaps, in the former plays, completed his own idea, seems not to have been able to give Falstaff all his former power of entertainment.

This comedy is remarkable for the variety and number of the personages, who exhibit more characters appropriated and discriminated, than, perhaps, can be found in any other play.

Whether Shakespeare was the first that produced upon the English stage the effect of language distorted and depraved by provincial or foreign pronunciation, I cannot certainly decide[t]. This mode of forming ridiculous characters can confer praise only on him who originally discovered it, for it requires not much of either wit or judgment; its success must be derived almost wholly from the player, but its power in a skilful mouth even he that despises it is unable to resist.

The conduct of this drama is deficient; the action begins and ends often before the conclusion, and the different parts might change places without inconvenience; but its general power, that power by which all works of genius shall finally be tried, is such, that, perhaps, it never yet had reader or spectator, who did not think it too soon at an end.

MEASURE FOR MEASURE.

There is, perhaps, not one of Shakespeare's plays more

[t] In the Three Ladies of London, 1584, is the character of an Italian merchant, very strongly marked by foreign pronunciation. Dr. Dodypoll, in the Comedy which bears his name, is, like Caius, a French physician. This piece appeared, at least, a year before The Merry Wives of Windsor. The hero of it speaks such another jargon as the antagonist of Sir Hugh, and, like him, is cheated of his mistress. In several other pieces, more ancient than the earliest of Shakespeare's, provincial characters are introduced—Steevens.

In the old play of Henry V. French soldiers are introduced speaking broken English.—Boswell.

darkened than this, by the peculiarities of its author, and the unskilfulness of its editors, by distortions of phrase, or negligence of transcription.

The novel of Giraldi Cynthio, from which Shakespeare is supposed to have borrowed this fable, may be read in Shakespeare Illustrated, elegantly translated, with remarks, which will assist the inquirer to discover how much absurdity Shakespeare has admitted or avoided.

I cannot but suspect that some other had new modelled the novel of Cynthio, or written a story which, in some particulars, resembled it, and that Cynthio was not the author whom Shakespeare immediately followed. The emperour, in Cynthio, is named Maximine; the duke, in Shakespeare's enumeration of the persons of the drama, is called Vincentio. This appears a very slight remark; but since the duke has no name in the play, nor is ever mentioned but by his title, why should he be called Vincentio among the persons, but because the name was copied from the story, and placed superfluously at the head of the list, by the mere habit of transcription? It is, therefore, likely that there was then a story of Vincentio duke of Vienna, different from that of Maximine emperour of the Romans.

Of this play, the light or comick part is very natural and pleasing, but the grave scenes, if a few passages be excepted, have more labour than elegance. The plot is rather intricate than artful. The time of the action is indefinite; some time, we know not how much, must have elapsed between the recess of the duke and the imprisonment of Claudio; for he must have learned the story of Mariana in his disguise, or he delegated his power to a man already known to be corrupted. The unities of action and place are sufficiently preserved.

LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST.

In this play, which all the editors have concurred to censure, and some have rejected as unworthy of our poet, it must be confessed that there are many passages mean, childish and vulgar; and some which ought not to have

been exhibited, as we are told they were, to a maiden queen. But there are scattered through the whole many sparks of genius; nor is there any play that has more evident marks of the hand of Shakespeare[w].

MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM.

Wild and fantastical as this play is, all the parts, in their various modes, are well written, and give the kind of pleasure which the author designed. Fairies in his time were much in fashion; common tradition had made them familiar, and Spenser's poem had made them great[x].

MERCHANT OF VENICE.

It has been lately discovered, that this fable is taken from a story in the Pecorone[y] of Ser Giovanni Fiorentino, a novelist, who wrote in 1378. The story has been published in English, and I have epitomized the translation. The translator is of opinion that the choice of the caskets is borrowed from a tale of Boccace, which I have, likewise, abridged, though I believe that Shakespeare must have had some other novel in view.

Of The Merchant of Venice the style is even and easy, with few peculiarities of diction, or anomalies of construction. The comick part raises laughter, and the serious fixes expectation. The probability of either one or the other story cannot be maintained. The union of two ac-

[w] See, however, Dr. Drake's Essays on Rambler &c. ii. 392.—Ed.

[x] Johnson's concluding observation on this play, is not conceived with his usual judgment. There is no analogy or resemblance whatever between the fairies of Spenser, and those of Shakespeare. The fairies of Spenser, as appears from his description of them in the second book of the Faerie Queene, Canto 10. were a race of mortals created by Prometheus, of the human size, shape, and affections, and subject to death. But those of Shakespeare, and of common tradition, as Johnson calls them, were a diminutive race of sportful beings, endowed with immortality and supernatural power, totally different from those of Spenser.—M. Mason.

[y] The first novel of the fourth day. An epitome of the novels, from which the story of this play is supposed to be taken, is appended to it in Malone's edition, v. 154.

tions in one event is, in this drama, eminently happy. Dryden was much pleased with his own address in connecting the two plots of his Spanish Friar, which yet, I believe, the critick will find excelled by this play.

AS YOU LIKE IT.

Of this play the fable is wild and pleasing. I know not how the ladies will approve the facility with which both Rosalind and Celia give away their hearts. To Celia much may be forgiven for the heroism of her friendship. The character of Jaques is natural and well preserved. The comick dialogue is very sprightly, with less mixture of low buffoonery than in some other plays; and the graver part is elegant and harmonious. By hastening to the end of his work, Shakespeare suppressed the dialogue between the usurper and the hermit, and lost an opportunity of exhibiting a moral lesson, in which he might have found matter worthy of his highest powers.

TAMING OF THE SHREW.

Of this play the two plots are so well united, that they can hardly be called two, without injury to the art with which they are interwoven. The attention is entertained with all the variety of a double plot, yet is not distracted by unconnected incidents.

The part between Catharine and Petruchio is eminently sprightly and diverting. At the marriage of Bianca, the arrival of the real father, perhaps, produces more perplexity than pleasure. The whole play is very popular and diverting.

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL.

This play has many delightful scenes, though not sufficiently probable, and some happy characters, though not new, nor produced by any deep knowledge of human nature. Parolles is a boaster and a coward, such as has always been the sport of the stage, but, perhaps, never raised more laughter or contempt than in the hands of Shakespeare.

I cannot reconcile my heart to Bertram; a man noble without generosity, and young without truth; who marries Helen as a coward, and leaves her as a profligate: when she is dead by his unkindness, sneaks home to a second marriage, is accused by a woman whom he has wronged, defends himself by falsehood, and is dismissed to happiness[z].

The story of Bertram and Diana had been told before of Mariana and Angelo, and, to confess the truth, scarcely merited to be heard a second time.

TWELFTH NIGHT.

This play is, in the graver part, elegant and easy, and, in some of the lighter scenes, exquisitely humorous. Aguecheek is drawn with great propriety, but his character is, in a great measure, that of natural fatuity, and is, therefore, not the proper prey of a satirist. The soliloquy of Malvolio is truly comick; he is betrayed to ridicule merely by his pride. The marriage of Olivia, and the succeeding perplexity, though well enough contrived to divert on the stage, wants credibility, and fails to produce the proper instruction required in the drama, as it exhibits no just picture of life.

WINTER'S TALE.

The story of this play is taken from The Pleasant History of Dorastus and Fawnia, written by Robert Greene.

This play, as Dr. Warburton justly observes, is, with all its absurdities, very entertaining. The character of Autolycus is very naturally conceived, and strongly represented.

MACBETH.

This play is deservedly celebrated for the propriety of its fictions, and solemnity, grandeur, and variety of its action; but it has no nice discriminations of character; the

[z] This opinion of the character of Bertram is examined at considerable length in the New Monthly Magazine, iv. 481.—Ed.

events are too great to admit the influence of particular dispositions, and the course of the action necessarily determines the conduct of the agents.

The danger of ambition is well described; and I know not whether it may not be said, in defence of some parts which now seem improbable, that, in Shakespeare's time, it was necessary to warn credulity against vain and illusive predictions.

The passions are directed to their true end. Lady Macbeth is merely detested; and though the courage of Macbeth preserves some esteem, yet every reader rejoices at his fall.

KING JOHN.

The tragedy of King John, though not written with the utmost power of Shakespeare, is varied with a very pleasing interchange of incidents and characters. The lady's grief is very affecting, and the character of the bastard contains that mixture of greatness and levity which this author delighted to exhibit.

KING RICHARD II.

This play is extracted from the Chronicle of Holinshed, in which many passages may be found which Shakespeare has, with very little alteration, transplanted into his scenes; particularly a speech of the bishop of Carlisle in defence of King Richard's unalienable right, and immunity from human jurisdiction.

Jonson, who, in his Catiline and Sejanus, has inserted many speeches from the Roman historians, was, perhaps, induced to that practice by the example of Shakespeare, who had condescended sometimes to copy more ignoble writers. But Shakespeare had more of his own than Jonson, and, if he sometimes was willing to spare his labour, showed by what he performed at other times, that his extracts were made by choice or idleness rather than necessity.

This play is one of those which Shakespeare has appa-

rently revised[a]; but as success in works of invention is not always proportionate to labour, it is not finished at last with the happy force of some other of his tragedies, nor can be said much to affect the passions or enlarge the understanding.

KING HENRY IV. PART II.

I fancy every reader, when he ends this play, cries out with Desdemona, "O most lame and impotent conclusion!" As this play was not, to our knowledge, divided into acts by the author, I could be content to conclude it with the death of Henry the Fourth.

"In that Jerusalem shall Harry die."

These scenes, which now make the fifth act of Henry IV. might then be the first of Henry V. but the truth is, that they do not unite very commodiously to either play. When these plays were represented, I believe they ended as they are now ended in the books; but Shakespeare seems to have designed that the whole series of action, from the beginning of Richard II. to the end of Henry V. should be considered by the reader as one work, upon one plan, only broken into parts by the necessity of exhibition.

None of Shakespeare's plays are more read than the first and second parts of Henry IV. Perhaps no author has ever in two plays afforded so much delight. The great events are interesting, for the fate of kingdoms depends upon them; the slighter occurrences are diverting, and, except one or two, sufficiently probable; the incidents are multiplied with wonderful fertility of invention, and the characters diversified with the utmost nicety of discernment, and the profoundest skill in the nature of man.

The prince, who is the hero both of the comick and tragick part, is a young man of great abilities and violent

[a] The notion that Shakespeare revised this play, though it has long prevailed, appears to me extremely doubtful; or to speak more plainly, I do not believe it. MALONE. See too the Essay on the Chronological order of Shakespeare's plays, Malone's edition. ii.

passions, whose sentiments are right, though his actions are wrong; whose virtues are obscured by negligence, and whose understanding is dissipated by levity. In his idle hours he is rather loose than wicked; and when the occasion forces out his latent qualities, he is great without effort, and brave without tumult. The trifler is roused into a hero, and the hero again reposes in the trifler. This character is great, original and just.

Percy is a rugged soldier, cholerick and quarrelsome, and has only the soldier's virtues, generosity and courage.

But Falstaff, unimitated, unimitable Falstaff, how shall I describe thee! thou compound of sense and vice; of sense which may be admired, but not esteemed; of vice which may be despised, but hardly detested. Falstaff is a character loaded with faults, and with those faults which naturally produce contempt. He is a thief and a glutton, a coward and a boaster, always ready to cheat the weak, and prey upon the poor; to terrify the timorous, and insult the defenceless. At once obsequious and malignant, he satirizes in their absence those whom he lives by flattering. He is familiar with the prince only as an agent of vice, but of this familiarity he is so proud, as not only to be supercilious and haughty with common men, but to think his interest of importance to the duke of Lancaster. Yet the man thus corrupt, thus despicable, makes himself necessary to the prince that despises him, by the most pleasing of all qualities, perpetual gaiety, by an unfailing power of exciting laughter, which is the more freely indulged, as his wit is not of the splendid or ambitious kind, but consists in easy scapes and sallies of levity, which make sport, but raise no envy. It must be observed, that he is stained with no enormous or sanguinary crimes, so that his licentiousness is not so offensive but that it may be borne for his mirth.

The moral to be drawn from this representation is, that no man is more dangerous than he that, with a will to corrupt, hath the power to please; and that neither wit nor honesty ought to think themselves safe with such a companion, when they see Henry seduced by Falstaff.

KING HENRY V.

This play has many scenes of high dignity, and many of easy merriment. The character of the king is well supported, except in his courtship, where he has neither the vivacity of Hal, nor the grandeur of Henry. The humour of Pistol is very happily continued; his character has, perhaps, been the model of all the bullies that have yet appeared on the English stage.

The lines given to the chorus have many admirers; but the truth is, that in them a little may be praised, and much must be forgiven: nor can it be easily discovered why the intelligence given by the chorus is more necessary in this play than in many others where it is omitted. The great defect of this play is the emptiness and narrowness of the last act, which a very little diligence might have easily avoided.

KING HENRY VI. PART I.

Of this play there is no copy earlier than that of the folio in 1623, though the two succeeding parts are extant in two editions in quarto. That the second and third parts were published without the first, may be admitted, as no weak proof that the copies were surreptitiously obtained, and that the printers of that time gave the publick those plays, not such as the author designed, but such as they could get them. That this play was written before the two others is indubitably collected from the series of events; that it was written and played before Henry V. is apparent, because in the epilogue there is mention made of this play, and not of the other parts:

> Henry the sixth in swaddling bands crown'd king,
> Whose state so many had i' the managing
> That they lost France, and made all England rue,
> Which oft our stage hath shown.

France is lost in this play. The two following contain, as the old title imports, the contention of the houses of York and Lancaster.

The two first parts of Henry VI. were printed in 1600. When Henry V. was written, we know not, but it was printed likewise in 1600, and, therefore, before the publication of the first and second parts: the first part of Henry VI. had been often shown on the stage, and would certainly have appeared in its place had the author been the publisher.

KING HENRY VI. PART III.

The three parts of Henry VI. are suspected, by Mr. Theobald, of being supposititious, and are declared, by Dr. Warburton, to be certainly not Shakespeare's[b]. Mr. Theobald's suspicion arises from some obsolete words; but the phraseology is like the rest of our author's style, and single words, of which, however, I do not observe more than two, can conclude little.

Dr. Warburton gives no reason, but I suppose him to judge upon deeper principles and more comprehensive views, and to draw his opinion from the general effect and spirit of the composition, which he thinks inferiour to the other historical plays.

From mere inferiority nothing can be inferred; in the productions of wit there will be inequality. Sometimes judgment will err, and sometimes the matter itself will defeat the artist. Of every author's works one will be the best, and one will be the worst. The colours are not equally pleasing, nor the attitudes equally graceful, in all the pictures of Titian or Reynolds.

Dissimilitude of style, and heterogeneousness of sentiment, may sufficiently show that a work does not really belong to the reputed author. But in these plays no such marks of spuriousness are found. The diction, the versification, and the figures, are Shakespeare's. These plays,

[b] For a full discussion of this point, see the Dissertation on the three parts of King Henry VI. tending to show that those plays were not written originally by Shakespeare. The dissertation was written by Malone, and pronounced by Porson to be one of the most convincing pieces of criticism he had ever met with. Malone's Shakespeare, xviii. 557.

considered, without regard to characters and incidents, merely as narratives in verse, are more happily conceived, and more accurately finished, than those of King John, Richard II. or the tragick scenes of Henry IV. and V. If we take these plays from Shakespeare, to whom shall they be given? What author of that age had the same easiness of expression and fluency of numbers?

Having considered the evidence given by the plays themselves, and found it in their favour, let us now inquire what corroboration can be gained from other testimony. They are ascribed to Shakespeare by the first editors, whose attestation may be received in questions of fact, however unskilfully they superintended their edition. They seem to be declared genuine by the voice of Shakespeare himself, who refers to the second play in his epilogue to Henry V. and apparently connects the first act of Richard III. with the last of the third part of Henry VI. If it be objected that the plays were popular, and that, therefore, he alluded to them as well known; it may be answered, with equal probability, that the natural passions of a poet would have disposed him to separate his own works from those of an inferiour hand. And, indeed, if an author's own testimony is to be overthrown by speculative criticism, no man can be any longer secure of literary reputation.

Of these three plays I think the second the best. The truth is, that they have not sufficient variety of action, for the incidents are too often of the same kind; yet many of the characters are well discriminated. King Henry and his queen, king Edward, the duke of Gloucester, and the earl of Warwick, are very strongly and distinctly painted.

The old copies of the two latter parts of Henry VI. and of Henry V. are so apparently imperfect and mutilated, that there is no reason for supposing them the first draughts of Shakespeare. I am inclined to believe them copies taken by some auditor who wrote down, during the representation, what the time would permit, then, perhaps, filled up some of his omissions at a second or third hearing, and

when he had by this method formed something like a play, sent it to the printer[c].

KING RICHARD III.

This is one of the most celebrated of our author's performances; yet I know not whether it has not happened to him as to others, to be praised most, when praise is not most deserved. That this play has scenes noble in themselves, and very well contrived to strike in the exhibition, cannot be denied. But some parts are trifling, others shocking, and some improbable.

I have nothing to add to the observations of the learned criticks, but that some traces of this antiquated exhibition are still retained in the rustick puppet-plays, in which I have seen the Devil very lustily belaboured by Punch, whom I hold to be the legitimate successor of the old Vice[d].

KING HENRY VIII.

The play of Henry VIII. is one of those which still keeps possession of the stage by the splendour of its pageantry. The coronation, about forty years ago, drew the people together in multitudes for a great part of the winter[e]. Yet pomp is not the only merit of this play. The meek sorrows and virtuous distress of Catharine have furnished some scenes which may be justly numbered among the greatest efforts of tragedy. But the genius of Shakespeare comes in and goes out with Catharine[f]. Every other part may be easily conceived, and easily written.

The historical dramas are now concluded, of which the

[c] See this opinion controverted. Malone's Shakespeare, xviii. 550.—Ed.

[d] This paragraph, apparently so unconnected with the preceding, refers to some critical dissertations on the character of Vice. They may be found in Malone's Shakespeare, xix. 244. See likewise Pursuits of Literature, Dialogue the First.—Ed.

[e] Chetwood says, that during one season it was exhibited 75 times. See his History of the Stage, p. 68.—Ed.

[f] Dr. Johnson told Mrs. Siddons that he admired her most in this character. —Mrs. Piozzi.

two parts of Henry IV. and Henry V. are among the happiest of our author's compositions; and King John, Richard III. and Henry VIII. deservedly stand in the second class. Those whose curiosity would refer the historical scenes to their original, may consult Holinshed, and sometimes Hall: from Holinshed, Shakespeare has often inserted whole speeches, with no more alteration than was necessary to the numbers of his verse. To transcribe them into the margin was unnecessary, because the original is easily examined, and they are seldom less perspicuous in the poet than in the historian.

To play histories, or to exhibit a succession of events by action and dialogue, was a common entertainment among our rude ancestors upon great festivities. The parish clerks once performed at Clerkenwell a play, which lasted three days, containing the History of the World.

CORIOLANUS.

The tragedy of Coriolanus is one of the most amusing of our author's performances. The old man's merriment in Menenius; the lofty lady's dignity in Volumnia; the bridal modesty in Virgilia; the patrician and military haughtiness in Coriolanus; the plebeian malignity, and tribunitian insolence in Brutus and Sicinius, make a very pleasing and interesting variety: and the various revolutions of the hero's fortune fill the mind with anxious curiosity. There is, perhaps, too much bustle in the first act, and too little in the last.

JULIUS CÆSAR.

Of this tragedy many particular passages deserve regard, and the contention and reconcilement of Brutus and Cassius is universally celebrated; but I have never been strongly agitated in perusing it, and think it somewhat cold and unaffecting, compared with some other of Shakespeare's plays; his adherence to the real story, and to Roman manners, seems to have impeded the natural vigour of his genius.

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA.

This play keeps curiosity always busy, and the passions always interested. The continual hurry of the action, the variety of incidents, and the quick succession of one personage to another, call the mind forward, without intermission, from the first act to the last. But the power of delighting is derived principally from the frequent changes of the scene; for, except the feminine arts, some of which are too low, which distinguish Cleopatra, no character is very strongly discriminated. Upton, who did not easily miss what he desired to find, has discovered that the language of Antony is, with great skill and learning, made pompous and superb, according to his real practice. But I think his diction not distinguishable from that of others: the most tumid speech in the play is that which Cæsar makes to Octavia.

The events, of which the principal are described according to history, are produced without any art of connexion or care of disposition.

TIMON OF ATHENS.

The play of Timon is a domestick tragedy, and, therefore, strongly fastens on the attention of the reader. In the plan there is not much art, but the incidents are natural, and the characters various and exact. The catastrophe affords a very powerful warning against that ostentatious liberality, which scatters bounty, but confers no benefits, and buys flattery, but not friendship.

In this tragedy are many passages perplexed, obscure, and probably corrupt, which I have endeavoured to rectify or explain, with due diligence; but having only one copy, cannot promise myself that my endeavours will be much applauded.

TITUS ANDRONICUS.

All the editors and criticks agree with Mr. Theobald in supposing this play spurious. I see no reason for differing

from them; for the colour of the style is wholly different from that of the other plays, and there is an attempt at regular versification and artificial closes, not always inelegant, yet seldom pleasing. The barbarity of the spectacles, and the general massacre, which are here exhibited, can scarcely be conceived tolerable to any audience; yet we are told by Jonson, that they were not only borne, but praised. That Shakespeare wrote any part, though Theobald declares it incontestable, I see no reason for believing.

The testimony produced at the beginning of this play, by which it is ascribed to Shakespeare, is by no means equal to the argument against its authenticity, arising from the total difference of conduct, language and sentiments, by which it stands apart from all the rest. Meres had probably no other evidence than that of a title-page, which, though in our time it be sufficient, was then of no great authority; for all the plays which were rejected by the first collectors of Shakespeare's works, and admitted in later editions, and again rejected by the critical editors, had Shakespeare's name on the title [g], as we must suppose, by the fraudulence of the printers, who, while there were yet no gazettes, nor advertisements, nor any means of circulating literary intelligence, could usurp at pleasure any celebrated name. Nor had Shakespeare any interest in detecting the imposture, as none of his fame or profit was produced by the press.

The chronology of this play does not prove it not to be Shakespeare's. If it had been written twenty-five years in 1614, it might have been written when Shakespeare was twenty-five years old. When he left Warwickshire I know not; but at the age of twenty-five it was rather too late to fly for deer-stealing.

[g] This statement is not quite accurate concerning the seven spurious plays, which the printer of the folio in 1664 improperly admitted into his volume. The name of Shakespeare appears only in the title-pages of four of them: Pericles, Sir John Oldcastle, the London Prodigal, and the Yorkshire Tragedy. Malone's Shak. xxi. 382.

Ravenscroft, who in the reign of Charles II. revised this play, and restored it to the stage, tells us, in his preface, from a theatrical tradition, I suppose, which in his time might be of sufficient authority, that this play was touched, in different parts, by Shakespeare, but written by some other poet. I do not find Shakespeare's touches very discernible.

TROILUS AND CRESSIDA.

This play is more correctly written than most of Shakespeare's compositions, but it is not one of those in which either the extent of his views or elevation of his fancy is fully displayed. As the story abounded with materials, he has exerted little invention; but he has diversified his characters with great variety, and preserved them with great exactness. His vicious characters sometimes disgust, but cannot corrupt, for both Cressida and Pandarus are detested and contemned. The comick characters seem to have been the favourites of the writer; they are of the superficial kind, and exhibit more of manners than nature; but they are copiously filled, and powerfully impressed.

Shakespeare has in his story followed, for the greater part, the old book of Caxton, which was then very popular; but the character of Thersites, of which it makes no mention, is a proof that this play was written after Chapman had published his version of Homer[h].

CYMBELINE.

This play has many just sentiments, some natural dialogues, and some pleasing scenes, but they are obtained at the expense of much incongruity. To remark the folly of the fiction, the absurdity of the conduct, the confusion of the names and manners of different times, and the impos-

[h] The first seven books of Chapman's Homer were published in the year 1596, and again in 1598. The whole twenty-four of the Iliad appeared in 1611. —Steevens.

sibility of the events in any system of life, were to waste criticism upon unresisting imbecility, upon faults too evident for detection, and too gross for aggravation.

KING LEAR.

The tragedy of Lear is deservedly celebrated among the dramas of Shakespeare. There is, perhaps, no play which keeps the attention so strongly fixed; which so much agitates our passions, and interests our curiosity. The artful involutions of distinct interests, the striking oppositions of contrary characters, the sudden changes of fortune, and the quick succession of events, fill the mind with a perpetual tumult of indignation, pity and hope. There is no scene which does not contribute to the aggravation of the distress or conduct of the action, and scarce a line which does not conduce to the progress of the scene. So powerful is the current of the poet's imagination, that the mind, which once ventures within it, is hurried irresistibly along.

On the seeming improbability of Lear's conduct, it may be observed, that he is represented according to histories at that time vulgarly received as true. And, perhaps, if we turn our thoughts upon the barbarity and ignorance of the age to which this story is referred, it will appear not so unlikely as while we estimate Lear's manners by our own. Such preference of one daughter to another, or resignation of dominion on such conditions, would be yet credible, if told of a petty prince of Guinea or Madagascar. Shakespeare, indeed, by the mention of his earls and dukes, has given us the idea of times more civilized, and of life regulated by softer manners; and the truth is, that though he so nicely discriminates, and so minutely describes the characters of men, he commonly neglects and confounds the characters of ages, by mingling customs ancient and modern, English and foreign.

My learned friend Mr. Warton, who has, in the Adventurer, very minutely criticised this play, remarks, that the instances of cruelty are too savage and shocking, and that the intervention of Edmund destroys the simplicity of the

story. These objections may, I think, be answered, by repeating, that the cruelty of the daughters is an historical fact, to which the poet has added little, having only drawn it into a series by dialogue and action. But I am not able to apologize with equal plausibility for the extrusion of Gloster's eyes, which seems an act too horrid to be endured in dramatick exhibition, and such as must always compel the mind to relieve its distress by incredulity. Yet let it be remembered that our author well knew what would please the audience for which he wrote.

The injury done by Edmund to the simplicity of the action is abundantly recompensed by the addition of variety, by the art with which he is made to co-operate with the chief design, and the opportunity which he gives the poet of combining perfidy with perfidy, and connecting the wicked son with the wicked daughters, to impress this important moral, that villany is never at a stop, that crimes lead to crimes, and at last terminate in ruin.

But though this moral be incidentally enforced, Shakespeare has suffered the virtue of Cordelia to perish in a just cause, contrary to the natural ideas of justice, to the hope of the reader, and, what is yet more strange, to the faith of chronicles. Yet this conduct is justified by the Spectator, who blames Tate for giving Cordelia success and happiness in his alteration, and declares, that, in his opinion, "the tragedy has lost half its beauty." Dennis has remarked, whether justly or not, that, to secure the favourable reception of Cato, "the town was poisoned with much false and abominable criticism," and that endeavours had been used to discredit and decry poetical justice. A play in which the wicked prosper, and the virtuous miscarry, may doubtless be good, because it is a just representation of the common events of human life: but since all reasonable beings naturally love justice, I cannot easily be persuaded, that the observation of justice makes a play worse; or that, if other excellencies are equal, the audience will not always rise better pleased from the final triumph of persecuted virtue.

In the present case the publick has decided[1]. Cordelia, from the time of Tate, has always retired with victory and felicity. And, if my sensations could add any thing to the general suffrage, I might relate, I was many years ago so shocked by Cordelia's death, that I know not whether I ever endured to read again the last scenes of the play till I undertook to revise them as an editor.

There is another controversy among the criticks concerning this play. It is disputed whether the predominant image in Lear's disordered mind be the loss of his kingdom or the cruelty of his daughters. Mr. Murphy, a very judicious critick, has evinced by induction of particular passages, that the cruelty of his daughters is the primary source of his distress, and that the loss of royalty affects him only as a secondary and subordinate evil. He observes, with great justness, that Lear would move our compassion but little, did we not rather consider the injured father than the degraded king.

The story of this play, except the episode of Edmund, which is derived, I think, from Sidney, is taken originally from Geoffry of Monmouth, whom Holinshed generally copied; but, perhaps, immediately from an old historical ballad. My reason for believing that the play was posterior to the ballad, rather than the ballad to the play, is, that the ballad has nothing of Shakespeare's nocturnal tempest, which is too striking to have been omitted, and that it follows the chronicle; it has the rudiments of the play, but none of its amplifications: it first hinted Lear's madness, but did not array it in circumstances. The writer of the ballad added something to the history, which is a proof that he would have added more, if more had occurred to his mind, and more must have occurred if he had seen Shakespeare.

[1] Dr. Johnson should rather have said that the managers of the theatres-royal have decided, and that the public has been obliged to acquiesce in their decision. The altered play has the upper gallery on its side; the original drama was patronized by Addison:

Victrix causa *Diis* placuit, sed victa *Catoni*. LUCAN.

Malone's Shak. x. 290.

ROMEO AND JULIET.

This play is one of the most pleasing of our author's performances. The scenes are busy and various, the incidents numerous and important, the catastrophe irresistibly affecting, and the process of the action carried on with such probability, at least with such congruity to popular opinions, as tragedy requires.

Here is one of the few attempts of Shakespeare to exhibit the conversation of gentlemen, to represent the airy sprightliness of juvenile elegance. Mr. Dryden mentions a tradition, which might easily reach his time, of a declaration made by Shakespeare, that "he was obliged to kill Mercutio in the third act, lest he should have been killed by him." Yet he thinks him "no such formidable person, but that he might have lived through the play, and died in his bed," without danger to the poet. Dryden well knew, had he been in quest of truth, that, in a pointed sentence, more regard is commonly had to the words than the thought, and that it is very seldom to be rigorously understood. Mercutio's wit, gaiety and courage, will always procure him friends that wish him a longer life; but his death is not precipitated, he has lived out the time allotted him in the construction of the play; nor do I doubt the ability of Shakespeare to have continued his existence, though some of his sallies are, perhaps, out of the reach of Dryden; whose genius was not very fertile of merriment, nor ductile to humour, but acute, argumentative, comprehensive and sublime.

The nurse is one of the characters in which the author delighted; he has, with great subtilty of distinction, drawn her at once loquacious and secret, obsequious and insolent, trusty and dishonest.

His comick scenes are happily wrought, but his pathetick strains are always polluted with some unexpected depravations. His persons, however distressed, have a conceit left them in their misery, a miserable conceit.

HAMLET.

If the dramas of Shakespeare were to be characterized, each by the particular excellence which distinguishes it from the rest, we must allow to the tragedy of Hamlet the praise of variety. The incidents are so numerous, that the argument of the play would make a long tale. The scenes are interchangeably diversified with merriment and solemnity; with merriment, that includes judicious and instructive observations; and solemnity, not strained by poetical violence above the natural sentiments of man. New characters appear from time to time in continual succession, exhibiting various forms of life and particular modes of conversation. The pretended madness of Hamlet causes much mirth, the mournful distraction of Ophelia fills the heart with tenderness, and every personage produces the effect intended, from the apparition that, in the first act, chills the blood with horrour, to the fop, in the last, that exposes affectation to just contempt.

The conduct is, perhaps, not wholly secure against objections. The action is, indeed, for the most part, in continual progression, but there are some scenes which neither forward nor retard it. Of the feigned madness of Hamlet there appears no adequate cause[k], for he does nothing which he might not have done with the reputation of sanity. He plays the madman most, when he treats Ophelia with so much rudeness, which seems to be useless and wanton cruelty.

Hamlet is, through the whole piece, rather an instrument than an agent. After he has, by the stratagem of the play, convicted the king, he makes no attempt to punish him; and his death is at last effected by an incident which Hamlet had no part in producing.

The catastrophe is not very happily produced; the ex-

[k] See, however, Mr. Boswell's long and erudite note in his Shakespeare, vii. 536. "Il me semble," says Madame De Staël, "qu'en lisant cette tragédie, on distingue parfaitement dans Hamlet l'égarement réel à travers l'égarement affecté."—M^me^. De Staël de la Littérature, c. xiii.

See also Schlegel in his Dramatic Literature. ii.—Ed.

change of weapons is rather an expedient of necessity, than a stroke of art. A scheme might easily have been formed to kill Hamlet with the dagger, and Laertes with the bowl.

The poet is accused of having shown little regard to poetical justice, and may be charged with equal neglect of poetical probability. The apparition left the regions of the dead to little purpose; the revenge which he demands is not obtained, but by the death of him that was required to take it; and the gratification, which would arise from the destruction of an usurper and a murderer, is abated by the untimely death of Ophelia, the young, the beautiful, the harmless, and the pious.

OTHELLO.

The beauties of this play impress themselves so strongly upon the attention of the reader, that they can draw no aid from critical illustration. The fiery openness of Othello, magnanimous, artless, and credulous, boundless in his confidence, ardent in his affection, inflexible in his resolution, and obdurate in his revenge; the cool malignity of Iago, silent in his resentment, subtle in his designs, and studious at once of his interest and his vengeance; the soft simplicity of Desdemona, confident of merit, and conscious of innocence, her artless perseverance in her suit, and her slowness to suspect that she can be suspected, are such proofs of Shakespeare's skill in human nature, as, I suppose, it is vain to seek in any modern writer. The gradual progress which Iago makes in the Moor's conviction, and the circumstances which he employs to inflame him, are so artfully natural, that, though it will, perhaps, not be said of him as he says of himself, that he is "a man not easily jealous," yet we cannot but pity him, when at last we find him "perplexed in the extreme."

There is always danger, lest wickedness, conjoined with abilities, should steal upon esteem, though it misses of approbation; but the character of Iago is so conducted,

that he is, from the first scene to the last, hated and despised.

Even the inferiour characters of this play would be very conspicuous in any other piece, not only for their justness, but their strength. Cassio is brave, benevolent and honest, ruined only by his want of stubbornness to resist an insidious invitation. Roderigo's suspicious credulity, and impatient submission to the cheats which he sees practised upon him, and which, by persuasion, he suffers to be repeated, exhibit a strong picture of a weak mind betrayed by unlawful desires to a false friend; and the virtue of Æmilia is such as we often find, worn loosely, but not cast off, easy to commit small crimes, but quickened and alarmed at atrocious villanies.

The scenes, from the beginning to the end, are busy, varied by happy interchanges, and regularly promoting the progression of the story; and the narrative, in the end, though it tells but what is known already, yet is necessary to produce the death of Othello.

Had the scene opened in Cyprus, and the preceding incidents been occasionally related, there had been little wanting to a drama of the most exact and scrupulous regularity.

AN ACCOUNT OF THE

HARLEIAN LIBRARY.

To solicit a subscription for a catalogue of books exposed to sale, is an attempt for which some apology cannot but be necessary; for few would willingly contribute to the expense of volumes, by which neither instruction nor entertainment could be afforded, from which only the bookseller could expect advantage, and of which the only use must cease, at the dispersion of the library[1].

Nor could the reasonableness of an universal rejection of our proposal be denied, if this catalogue were to be compiled with no other view, than that of promoting the sale of the books which it enumerates, and drawn up with that inaccuracy and confusion which may be found in those that are daily published.

But our design, like our proposal, is uncommon, and to be prosecuted at a very uncommon expense: it being intended, that the books shall be distributed into their distinct classes, and every class ranged with some regard to the age of the writers; that every book shall be accurately described; that the peculiarities of editions shall be remarked, and observations from the authors of literary history occasionally interspersed; that, by this catalogue, we may inform posterity of the excellence and value of this great collection, and promote the knowledge of scarce books, and elegant editions. For this purpose, men of letters are engaged, who cannot even be supplied with amanuenses, but at an expense above that of a common catalogue.

[1] This apology is no longer necessary, when the catalogue of Lord Spencer's library is published at 16*l.* 16*s.* See Dibdin's Bibliomania, Ædes Althorpianæ, and the indignant complaints of the author of the Pursuits of Literature.—Ed.

To show that this collection deserves a particular degree of regard from the learned and the studious, that it excels any library that was ever yet offered to publick sale, in the value, as well as number, of the volumes, which it contains; and that, therefore, this catalogue will not be of less use to men of letters, than those of the Thuanian, Heinsian, or Barberinian libraries, it may not be improper to exhibit a general account of the different classes, as they are naturally divided by the several sciences.

By this method we can, indeed, exhibit only a general idea, at once magnificent and confused; an idea of the writings of many nations, collected from distant parts of the world, discovered sometimes by chance, and sometimes by curiosity, amidst the rubbish of forsaken monasteries, and the repositories of ancient families, and brought hither from every part, as to the universal receptacle of learning.

It will be no unpleasing effect of this account, if those that shall happen to peruse it, should be inclined by it to reflect on the character of the late proprietors, and to pay some tribute of veneration to their ardour for literature, to that generous and exalted curiosity which they gratified with incessant searches and immense expense, and to which they dedicated that time, and that superfluity of fortune, which many others of their rank employ in the pursuit of contemptible amusements, or the gratification of guilty passions. And, surely, every man, who considers learning as ornamental and advantageous to the community, must allow them the honour of publick benefactors, who have introduced amongst us authors, not hitherto well known, and added to the literary treasures of their native country.

That our catalogue will excite any other man to emulate the collectors of this library, to prefer books and manuscripts to equipage and luxury, and to forsake noise and diversion for the conversation of the learned, and the satisfaction of extensive knowledge, we are very far from presuming to hope; but shall make no scruple to assert, that, if any man should happen to be seized with such laudable ambition, he may find in this catalogue hints and informa-

tions which are not easily to be met with; he will discover, that the boasted Bodleian library is very far from a perfect model, and that even the learned Fabricius cannot completely instruct him in the early editions of the classick writers.

But the collectors of libraries cannot be numerous; and, therefore, catalogues could not very properly be recommended to the publick, if they had not a more general and frequent use, an use which every student has experienced, or neglected to his loss. By the means of catalogues only, can it be known what has been written on every part of learning, and the hazard avoided of encountering difficulties which have already been cleared, discussing questions which have already been decided, and digging in mines of literature which former ages have exhausted.

How often this has been the fate of students, every man of letters can declare; and, perhaps, there are very few who have not sometimes valued as new discoveries, made by themselves, those observations, which have long since been published, and of which the world, therefore, will refuse them the praise; nor can the refusal be censured as any enormous violation of justice; for, why should they not forfeit by their ignorance, what they might claim by their sagacity?

To illustrate this remark, by the mention of obscure names, would not much confirm it; and to vilify, for this purpose, the memory of men truly great, would be to deny them the reverence which they may justly claim from those whom their writings have instructed. May the shade, at least, of one great English critick [m] rest without disturbance; and may no man presume to insult his memory, who wants his learning, his reason, or his wit.

From the vexatious disappointment of meeting reproach, where praise is expected, every man will certainly desire to be secured; and, therefore, that book will have some

[m] It is not quite clear to whom Johnson here alludes; perhaps to Bentley, and with reference to some of Garth's expressions:

So diamonds take a lustre from their foil;
And to a Bentley 'tis we owe a Boyle.
Dispensary, Canto V.

claim to his regard, from which he may receive informations of the labours of his predecessors, such as a catalogue of the Harleian library will copiously afford him.

Nor is the use of catalogues of less importance to those whom curiosity has engaged in the study of literary history, and who think the intellectual revolutions of the world more worthy of their attention, than the ravages of tyrants, the desolation of kingdoms, the rout of armies, and the fall of empires. Those who are pleased with observing the first birth of new opinions, their struggles against opposition, their silent progress under persecution, their general reception, and their gradual decline, or sudden extinction; those that amuse themselves with remarking the different periods of human knowledge, and observe how darkness and light succeed each other; by what accident the most gloomy nights of ignorance have given way to the dawn of science; and how learning has languished and decayed, for want of patronage and regard, or been overborne by the prevalence of fashionable ignorance, or lost amidst the tumults of invasion, and the storms of violence. All those who desire any knowledge of the literary transactions of past ages, may find in catalogues, like this at least, such an account as is given by annalists, and chronologers of civil history.

How the knowledge of the sacred writings has been diffused, will be observed from the catalogue of the various editions of the Bible, from the first impression by Fust, in 1462, to the present time; in which will be contained the polyglot editions of Spain, France, and England, those of the original Hebrew, the Greek Septuagint, and the Latin Vulgate; with the versions which are now used in the remotest parts of Europe, in the country of the Grisons, in Lithuania, Bohemia, Finland, and Iceland.

With regard to the attempts of the same kind made in our own country, there are few whose expectations will not be exceeded by the number of English Bibles, of which not one is forgotten, whether valuable for the pomp and beauty of the impression, or for the notes with which the

text is accompanied, or for any controversy or persecution that it produced, or for the peculiarity of any single passage. With the same care have the various editions of the book of Common Prayer been selected, from which all the alterations which have been made in it may be easily remarked.

Amongst a great number of Roman missals and breviaries, remarkable for the beauty of their cuts and illuminations, will be found the Mosarabick missal and breviary, that raised such commotions in the kingdom of Spain.

The controversial treatises written in England, about the time of the Reformation, have been diligently collected, with a multitude of remarkable tracts, single sermons, and small treatises; which, however worthy to be preserved, are, perhaps, to be found in no other place.

The regard which was always paid, by the collectors of this library, to that remarkable period of time, in which the art of printing was invented, determined them to accumulate the ancient impressions of the fathers of the church; to which the later editions are added, lest antiquity should have seemed more worthy of esteem than accuracy.

History has been considered with the regard due to that study by which the manners are most easily formed, and from which the most efficacious instruction is received; nor will the most extensive curiosity fail of gratification in this library, from which no writers have been excluded, that relate either the religious, or civil affairs of any nation.

Not only those authors of ecclesiastical history have been procured, that treat of the state of religion in general, or deliver accounts of sects or nations, but those, likewise, who have confined themselves to particular orders of men in every church; who have related the original, and the rules of every society, or recounted the lives of its founder and its members; those who have deduced in every country the succession of bishops, and those who have employed their abilities in celebrating the piety of particular saints, or martyrs, or monks, or nuns.

The civil history of all nations has been amassed toge-

ther; nor is it easy to determine which has been thought most worthy of curiosity.

Of France, not only the general histories and ancient chronicles, the accounts of celebrated reigns, and narratives of remarkable events, but even the memorials of single families, the lives of private men, the antiquities of particular cities, churches, and monasteries, the topography of provinces, and the accounts of laws, customs, and prescriptions, are here to be found.

The several states of Italy have, in this treasury, their particular historians, whose accounts are, perhaps, generally more exact, by being less extensive; and more interesting, by being more particular.

Nor has less regard been paid to the different nations of the Germanick empire, of which neither the Bohemians, nor Hungarians, nor Austrians, nor Bavarians, have been neglected; nor have their antiquities, however generally disregarded, been less studiously searched, than their present state.

The northern nations have supplied this collection, not only with history, but poetry, with Gothick antiquities and Runick inscriptions; which, at least, have this claim to veneration, above the remains of the Roman magnificence, that they are the works of those heroes by whom the Roman empire was destroyed; and which may plead, at least in this nation, that they ought not to be neglected by those that owe to the men whose memories they preserve, their constitution, their properties, and their liberties.

The curiosity of these collectors extended equally to all parts of the world; nor did they forget to add to the northern the southern writers, or to adorn their collection with chronicles of Spain, and the conquest of Mexico.

Even of those nations with which we have less intercourse, whose customs are less accurately known, and whose history is less distinctly recounted, there are in this library reposited such accounts as the Europeans have been hitherto able to obtain; nor are the Mogul, the

Tartar, the Turk, and the Saracen, without their historians.

That persons, so inquisitive with regard to the transactions of other nations, should inquire yet more ardently after the history of their own, may be naturally expected; and, indeed, this part of the library is no common instance of diligence and accuracy. Here are to be found, with the ancient chronicles, and larger histories of Britain, the narratives of single reigns, and the accounts of remarkable revolutions, the topographical histories of counties, the pedigrees of families, the antiquities of churches and cities, the proceedings of parliaments, the records of monasteries, and the lives of particular men, whether eminent in the church or the state, or remarkable in private life; whether exemplary for their virtues, or detestable for their crimes; whether persecuted for religion, or executed for rebellion.

That memorable period of the English history, which begins with the reign of king Charles the first, and ends with the Restoration, will almost furnish a library alone; such is the number of volumes, pamphlets and papers, which were published by either party; and such is the care with which they have been preserved.

Nor is history without the necessary preparatives and attendants, geography and chronology: of geography, the best writers and delineators have been procured, and pomp and accuracy have been both regarded; the student of chronology may here find, likewise, those authors who searched the records of time, and fixed the periods of history.

With the historians and geographers may be ranked the writers of voyages and travels, which may be read here in the Latin, English, Dutch, German, French, Italian, and Spanish languages.

The laws of different countries, as they are in themselves equally worthy of curiosity with their history, have, in this collection, been justly regarded; and the rules by

which the various communities of the world are governed, may be here examined and compared. Here are the ancient editions of the papal decretals, and the commentators on the civil law, the edicts of Spain, and the statutes of Venice.

But with particular industry have the various writers on the laws of our own country been collected, from the most ancient to the present time, from the bodies of the statutes to the minutest treatise; not only the reports, precedents, and readings of our own courts, but even the laws of our West-Indian colonies, will be exhibited in our catalogue.

But neither history nor law have been so far able to engross this library, as to exclude physick, philosophy, or criticism. Those have been thought, with justice, worthy of a place, who have examined the different species of animals, delineated their forms, or described their properties and instincts; or who have penetrated the bowels of the earth, treated on its different strata, and analyzed its metals; or who have amused themselves with less laborious speculations, and planted trees, or cultivated flowers.

Those that have exalted their thoughts above the minuter parts of the creation, who have observed the motions of the heavenly bodies, and attempted systems of the universe, have not been denied the honour which they deserved by so great an attempt, whatever has been their success. Nor have those mathematicians been rejected, who have applied their science to the common purposes of life; or those that have deviated into the kindred arts of tacticks, architecture, and fortification.

Even arts of far less importance have found their authors, nor have these authors been despised by the boundless curiosity of the proprietors of the Harleian library. The writers on horsemanship and fencing are more numerous and more bulky than could be expected by those who reflect, how seldom those excel in either, whom their education has qualified to compose books.

The admirer of Greek and Roman literature will meet, in this collection, with editions little known to the most in-

quisitive criticks, and which have escaped the observation of those whose great employment has been the collation of copies; nor will he find only the most ancient editions of Faustus, Jenson, Spira, Sweynheim and Pannartz, but the most accurate, likewise, and beautiful of Colinæus, the Juntæ, Plantin, Aldus, the Stephens, and Elzevir, with the commentaries and observations of the most learned editors.

Nor are they accompanied only with the illustrations of those who have confined their attempts to particular writers, but of those, likewise, who have treated on any part of the Greek or Roman antiquities, their laws, their customs, their dress, their buildings, their wars, their revenues, or the rites and ceremonies of their worship, and those that have endeavoured to explain any of their authors from their statues or their coins.

Next to the ancients, those writers deserve to be mentioned, who, at the restoration of literature, imitated their language and their style with so great success, or who laboured with so much industry to make them understood: such were Philelphus and Politian, Scaliger and Buchanan, and the poets of the age of Leo the tenth; these are, likewise, to be found in this library, together with the Deliciæ, or collections of all nations.

Painting is so nearly allied to poetry, that it cannot be wondered that those who have so much esteemed the one, have paid an equal regard to the other; and, therefore, it may be easily imagined, that the collection of prints is numerous in an uncommon degree; but, surely, the expectation of every man will be exceeded, when he is informed that there are more than forty thousand engraven from Raphael, Titian, Guido, the Carraccis, and a thousand others, by Nanteuil, Hollar, Callet, Edelinck, and Dorigny, and other engravers of equal reputation.

Their is also a great collection of original drawings, of which three seem to deserve a particular mention: the first exhibits a representation of the inside of St. Peter's church at Rome; the second, of that of St. John Lateran; and

the third, of the high altar of St. Ignatius; all painted with the utmost accuracy, in their proper colours.

As the value of this great collection may be conceived from this account, however imperfect; as the variety of subjects must engage the curiosity of men of different studies, inclinations, and employments, it may be thought of very little use to mention any slighter advantages, or to dwell on the decorations and embellishments which the generosity of the proprietors has bestowed upon it; yet, since the compiler of the Thuanian catalogue thought not even that species of elegance below his observation, it may not be improper to observe, that the Harleian library, perhaps, excels all others, not more in the number and excellence, than in the splendour of its volumes[n].

We may now, surely, be allowed to hope, that our catalogue will not be thought unworthy of the publick curiosity; that it will be purchased as a record of this great collection, and preserved as one of the memorials of learning.

The patrons of literature will forgive the purchaser of this library, if he presumes to assert some claim to their protection and encouragement, as he may have been instrumental in continuing to this nation the advantage of it. The sale of Vossius's collection into a foreign country, is, to this day, regretted by men of letters; and if this effort for the prevention of another loss of the same kind should be disadvantageous to him, no man will hereafter willingly risk his fortune in the cause of learning.

[n] Mr. Dibdin informs us, that Lord Oxford gave 18,000*l.* for the *binding* only the least part of the Harleian Library. See his Bibliomania.—Ed.

AN

ESSAY

ON THE

ORIGIN AND IMPORTANCE

OF

SMALL TRACTS AND FUGITIVE PIECES.

WRITTEN FOR THE INTRODUCTION TO

THE HARLEIAN MISCELLANY.

THOUGH the scheme of the following miscellany is so obvious, that the title alone is sufficient to explain it; and though several collections have been formerly attempted, upon plans, as to the method, very little, but, as to the capacity and execution, very different from ours; we, being possessed of the greatest variety for such a work, hope for a more general reception than those confined schemes had the fortune to meet with; and, therefore, think it not wholly unnecessary to explain our intentions, to display the treasure of materials out of which this miscellany is to be compiled, and to exhibit a general idea of the pieces which we intend to insert in it.

There is, perhaps, no nation in which it is so necessary, as in our own, to assemble, from time to time, the small tracts and fugitive pieces, which are occasionally published; for, besides the general subjects of inquiry, which are cultivated by us, in common with every other learned nation, our constitution in church and state naturally gives birth to a multitude of performances, which would either not have been written, or could not have been made publick in any other place.

The form of our government, which gives every man, that has leisure, or curiosity, or vanity, the right of inquiring into the propriety of publick measures, and, by consequence, obliges those who are intrusted with the administration of national affairs, to give an account of their conduct to almost every man who demands it, may be reasonably imagined to have occasioned innumerable pamphlets, which would never have appeared under arbitrary governments, where every man lulls himself in indolence under calamities, of which he cannot promote the redress, or thinks it prudent to conceal the uneasiness, of which he cannot complain without danger.

The multiplicity of religious sects tolerated among us, of which every one has found opponents and vindicators, is another source of unexhaustible publication, almost peculiar to ourselves; for controversies cannot be long continued, nor frequently revived, where an inquisitor has a right to shut up the disputants in dungeons; or where silence can be imposed on either party, by the refusal of a license.

Not, that it should be inferred from hence, that political or religious controversies are the only products of the liberty of the British press; the mind once let loose to inquiry, and suffered to operate without restraint, necessarily deviates into peculiar opinions, and wanders in new tracks, where she is, indeed, sometimes lost in a labyrinth, from which though she cannot return, and scarce knows how to proceed; yet, sometimes, makes useful discoveries, or finds out nearer paths to knowledge.

The boundless liberty with which every man may write his own thoughts, and the opportunity of conveying new sentiments to the publick, without danger of suffering either ridicule or censure, which every man may enjoy, whose vanity does not incite him too hastily to own his performances, naturally invites those who employ themselves in speculation, to try how their notions will be received by a nation, which exempts caution from fear, and modesty from shame; and it is no wonder, that where

reputation may be gained, but needs not be lost, multitudes are willing to try their fortune, and thrust their opinions into the light; sometimes with unsuccessful haste, and sometimes with happy temerity.

It is observed, that, among the natives of England, is to be found a greater variety of humour, than in any other country; and, doubtless, where every man has a full liberty to propagate his conceptions, variety of humour must produce variety of writers; and, where the number of authors is so great, there cannot but be some worthy of distinction.

All these, and many other causes, too tedious to be enumerated, have contributed to make pamphlets and small tracts a very important part of an English library; nor are there any pieces, upon which those, who aspire to the reputation of judicious collectors of books, bestow more attention, or greater expense; because many advantages may be expected from the perusal of these small productions, which are scarcely to be found in that of larger works.

If we regard history, it is well known, that most political treatises have for a long time appeared in this form, and that the first relations of transactions, while they are yet the subject of conversation, divide the opinions, and employ the conjectures of mankind, are delivered by these petty writers, who have opportunities of collecting the different sentiments of disputants, of inquiring the truth from living witnesses, and of copying their representations from the life; and, therefore, they preserve a multitude of particular incidents, which are forgotten in a short time, or omitted in formal relations, and which are yet to be considered as sparks of truth, which, when united, may afford light in some of the darkest scenes of state, as, we doubt not, will be sufficiently proved in the course of this miscellany; and which it is, therefore, the interest of the publick to preserve unextinguished.

The same observation may be extended to subjects of yet more importance. In controversies that relate to the

truths of religion, the first essays of reformation are generally timorous; and those, who have opinions to offer, which they expect to be opposed, produce their sentiments, by degrees, and, for the most part, in small tracts: by degrees, that they may not shock their readers with too many novelties at once; and in small tracts, that they may be easily dispersed, or privately printed. Almost every controversy, therefore, has been, for a time, carried on in pamphlets, nor has swelled into larger volumes, till the first ardour of the disputants has subsided, and they have recollected their notions with coolness enough to digest them into order, consolidate them into systems, and fortify them with authorities.

From pamphlets, consequently, are to be learned the progress of every debate; the various state to which the questions have been changed; the artifices and fallacies which have been used, and the subterfuges by which reason has been eluded. In such writings may be seen how the mind has been opened by degrees, how one truth has led to another, how errour has been disentangled, and hints improved to demonstration, which pleasure, and many others, are lost by him that only reads the larger writers, by whom these scattered sentiments are collected, who will see none of the changes of fortune which every opinion has passed through, will have no opportunity of remarking the transient advantages which errour may sometimes obtain, by the artifices of its patron, or the successful rallies, by which truth regains the day, after a repulse; but will be to him, who traces the dispute through into particular gradations, as he that hears of a victory, to him that sees the battle.

Since the advantages of preserving these small tracts are so numerous, our attempt to unite them in volumes cannot be thought either useless or unseasonable; for there is no other method of securing them from accidents; and they have already been so long neglected, that this design cannot be delayed, without hazarding the loss

of many pieces, which deserve to be transmitted to another age.

The practice of publishing pamphlets on the most important subjects has now prevailed more than two centuries among us; and, therefore, it cannot be doubted, but that, as no large collections have been yet made, many curious tracts must have perished; but it is too late to lament that loss; nor ought we to reflect upon it, with any other view, than that of quickening our endeavours for the preservation of those that yet remain; of which we have now a greater number, than was, perhaps, ever amassed by any one person.

The first appearance of pamphlets among us is generally thought to be at the new opposition raised against the errours and corruptions of the church of Rome. Those who were first convinced of the reasonableness of the new learning, as it was then called, propagated their opinions in small pieces, which were cheaply printed, and, what was then of great importance, easily concealed. These treatises were generally printed in foreign countries, and are not, therefore, always very correct. There was not then that opportunity of printing in private; for the number of printers was small, and the presses were easily overlooked by the clergy, who spared no labour or vigilance for the suppression of heresy. There is, however, reason to suspect, that some attempts were made to carry on the propagation of truth by a secret press; for one of the first treatises in favour of the Reformation, is said, at the end, to be printed at "Greenwich, by the permission of the Lord of Hosts."

In the time of king Edward the sixth, the presses were employed in favour of the reformed religion, and small tracts were dispersed over the nation, to reconcile them to new forms of worship. In this reign, likewise, political pamphlets may be said to have been begun, by the address of the rebels of Devonshire; all which means of propagating the sentiments of the people so disturbed the

court, that no sooner was queen Mary resolved to reduce her subjects to the Romish superstition, but she artfully, by a charter°, granted to certain freemen of London, in whose fidelity, no doubt, she confided, entirely prohibited ALL presses, but what should be licensed by them; which charter is that by which the corporation of Stationers in London is, at this time, incorporated.

Under the reign of queen Elizabeth, when liberty again began to flourish, the practice of writing pamphlets became more general; presses were multiplied, and books were dispersed; and, I believe, it may properly be said, that the trade of writing began at this time, and that it has, ever since, gradually increased in the number, though, perhaps, not in the style of those that followed it.

In this reign was erected the first secret press against the church, as now established, of which I have found any certain account. It was employed by the Puritans, and conveyed from one part of the nation to another, by them, as they found themselves in danger of discovery. From this press issued most of the pamphlets against Whitgift and his associates, in the ecclesiastical government; and, when it was at last seized at Manchester, it was employed upon a pamphlet called More Work for a Cooper.

In the peaceable reign of king James, those minds which might, perhaps, with less disturbance of the world, have been engrossed by war, were employed in controversy; and writings of all kinds were multiplied among us. The press, however, was not wholly engaged in polemical performances, for more innocent subjects were sometimes treated; and it deserves to be remarked, because it is not generally known, that the treatises of husbandry and agriculture, which were published about that time, are so numerous, that it can scarcely be imagined by whom they were written, or to whom they were sold.

The next reign is too well known to have been a time

° Which begins thus, "Know ye, that We, considering and manifestly perceiving, that several seditious and heretical books or tracts—against the faith and sound catholick doctrine of holy mother, the Church," &c.

of confusion and disturbance, and disputes of every kind; and the writings, which were produced, bear a natural proportion to the number of the questions that were discussed at that time; each party had its authors and its presses, and no endeavours were omitted to gain proselytes to every opinion. I know not whether this may not properly be called, The Age of Pamphlets; for, though they, perhaps, may not arise to such multitudes as Mr. Rawlinson imagined, they were, undoubtedly, more numerous than can be conceived by any who have not had an opportunity of examining them.

After the Restoration, the same differences, in religious opinions, are well known to have subsisted, and the same political struggles to have been frequently renewed; and, therefore, a great number of pens were employed, on different occasions, till, at length, all other disputes were absorbed in the popish controversy.

From the pamphlets which these different periods of time produced, it is proposed, that this miscellany shall be compiled, for which it cannot be supposed that materials will be wanting; and, therefore, the only difficulty will be in what manner to dispose them.

Those who have gone before us, in undertakings of this kind, have ranged the pamphlets, which chance threw into their hands, without any regard either to the subject on which they treated, or the time in which they were written; a practice in no wise to be imitated by us, who want for no materials; of which we shall choose those we think best for the particular circumstances of times and things, and most instructing and entertaining to the reader.

Of the different methods which present themselves, upon the first view of the great heaps of pamphlets which the Harleian library exhibits [p], the two which merit most attention are, to distribute the treatises according to their subjects, or their dates; but neither of these ways can be conveniently followed. By ranging our collection in order

[p] The pamphlets in the Harleian collection amounted in number to about 400,000. See Gough's Brit. Topog. 1669.

of time, we must necessarily publish those pieces first, which least engage the curiosity of the bulk of mankind; and our design must fall to the ground, for want of encouragement, before it can be so far advanced as to obtain general regard: by confining ourselves for any long time to any single subject, we shall reduce our readers to one class; and, as we shall lose all the grace of variety, shall disgust all those who read chiefly to be diverted. There is, likewise, one objection of equal force, against both these methods, that we shall preclude ourselves from the advantage of any future discoveries; and we cannot hope to assemble at once all the pamphlets which have been written in any age, or on any subject.

It may be added, in vindication of our intended practice, that it is the same with that of Photius, whose collections are no less miscellaneous than ours, and who declares, that he leaves it to his reader, to reduce his extracts under their proper heads.

Most of the pieces which shall be offered in this collection to the publick, will be introduced by short prefaces, in which will be given some account of the reasons for which they are inserted; notes will be sometimes adjoined, for the explanation of obscure passages, or obsolete expressions; and care will be taken to mingle use and pleasure through the whole collection. Notwithstanding every subject may not be relished by every reader, yet the buyer may be assured that each number will repay his generous subscription.

PREFACE TO THE CATALOGUE

OF THE

HARLEIAN LIBRARY, VOL. III.

HAVING prefixed to the former volumes of my catalogue an account of the prodigious collection accumulated in the Harleian library, there would have been no necessity of any introduction to the subsequent volumes, had not some censures, which this great undertaking has drawn upon me, made it proper to offer to the publick an apology for my conduct.

The price, which I have set upon my catalogue, has been represented by the booksellers as an avaricious innovation; and, in a paper published in the Champion, they, or their mercenary, have reasoned so justly, as to allege, that, if I could afford a very large price for the library, I might, therefore, afford to give away the catalogue.

I should have imagined that accusations, concerted by such heads as these, would have vanished of themselves, without any answer; but, since I have the mortification to find that they have been in some degree regarded by men of more knowledge than themselves, I shall explain the motives of my procedure.

My original design was, as I have already explained, to publish a methodical and exact catalogue of this library, upon the plan which has been laid down, as I am informed, by several men of the first rank among the learned. It was intended by those who undertook the work, to make a very exact disposition of all the subjects, and to give an account of the remarkable differences of the editions, and other peculiarities, which make any book eminently valu-

able: and it was imagined, that some improvements might, by pursuing this scheme, be made in literary history.

With this view was the catalogue begun, when the price was fixed upon it in publick advertisements; and it cannot be denied, that such a catalogue would have been willingly purchased by those who understood its use. But, when a few sheets had been printed, it was discovered, that the scheme was impracticable, without more hands than could be procured, or more time than the necessity of a speedy sale would allow: the catalogue was, therefore, continued without notes, at least in the greatest part; and, though it was still performed better than those which are daily offered to the publick, fell much below the original design.

It was then no longer proper to insist upon a price; and, therefore, though money was demanded, upon delivery of the catalogue, it was only taken as a pledge that the catalogue was not, as is very frequent, wantonly called for, by those who never intended to peruse it, and I, therefore, promised that it should be taken again in exchange for any book rated at the same value.

It may be still said, that other booksellers give away their catalogues without any such precaution, and that I ought not to make any new or extraordinary demands. But I hope it will be considered, at how much greater expense my catalogue was drawn up: and be remembered, that when other booksellers give their catalogues, they give only what will be of no use when their books are sold, and what, if it remained in their hands, they must throw away: whereas I hope that this catalogue will retain its use, and, consequently, its value, and be sold with the catalogues of the Barberinian and Marckian libraries.

However, to comply with the utmost expectations of the world, I have now published the second part of my catalogue, upon conditions still more commodious for the purchaser, as I intend, that all those who are pleased to receive them at the same price of five shillings a volume, shall be allowed, at any time, within three months after the

day of sale, either to return them in exchange for books, or to send them back, and receive their money.

Since, therefore, I have absolutely debarred myself from receiving any advantage from the sale of the catalogue, it will be reasonable to impute it rather to necessity than choice, that I shall continue it to two volumes more, which the number of the single tracts which have been discovered, makes indispensably requisite. I need not tell those who are acquainted with affairs of this kind, how much pamphlets swell a catalogue, since the title of the least book may be as long as that of the greatest.

Pamphlets have been for many years, in this nation, the canals of controversy, politicks, and sacred history, and, therefore, will, doubtless, furnish occasion to a very great number of curious remarks. And I take this opportunity of proposing to those who are particularly delighted with this kind of study, that, if they will encourage me, by a reasonable subscription, to employ men qualified to make the observations, for which this part of the catalogue will furnish occasion, I will procure the whole fifth and sixth volumes[q] to be executed in the same manner with the most laboured part of this, and interspersed with notes of the same kind.

If any excuse were necessary for the addition of these volumes, I have already urged in my defence the strongest plea, no less than absolute necessity, it being impossible to comprise in four volumes, however large, or however closely printed, the titles which yet remain to be mentioned.

But, I suppose, none will blame the multiplication of volumes, to whatever number they may be continued, which every one may use without buying them, and which are, therefore, published at no expense but my own.

There is one accusation still remaining, by which I am more sensibly affected, and which I am, therefore, desirous to obviate, before it has too long prevailed. I hear that I

[q] This scheme was never executed; the fifth volume, the only one subsequently published, was a mere shop catalogue.

am accused of rating my books at too high a price, at a price which no other person would demand. To answer this accusation, it is necessary to inquire what those who urge it, mean by a high price. The price of things, valuable for their rarity, is entirely arbitrary, and depends upon the variable taste of mankind, and the casual fluctuation of the fashion, and can never be ascertained, like that of things only estimable according to their use.

If, therefore, I have set a high value upon books: if I have vainly imagined literature to be more fashionable than it really is, or idly hoped to revive a taste well nigh extinguished, I know not why I should be persecuted with clamour and invective, since I only shall suffer by my mistake, and be obliged to keep those books, which I was in hopes of selling.

If those who charge me with asking a *high price*, will explain their meaning, it may be possible to give them an answer less general. If they measure the price at which the books are now offered, by that at which they were bought by the late possessor, they will find it diminished at least three parts in four; if they would compare it with the demands of other booksellers, they must first find the same books in their hands, and they will be, perhaps, at last reduced to confess, that they mean, by a high price, only a price higher than they are inclined to give.

I have, at least, a right to hope, that no gentleman will receive an account of the price from the booksellers, of whom it may easily be imagined that they will be willing, since they cannot depreciate the books, to exaggerate the price: and I will boldly promise those who have been influenced by malevolent reports, that, if they will be pleased, at the day of sale, to examine the prices with their own eyes, they will find them lower than they have been represented.

A

VIEW OF THE CONTROVERSY BETWEEN

MONS. CROUSAZ AND MR. WARBURTON,

ON THE SUBJECT OF

MR. POPE'S ESSAY ON MAN,

In a Letter to the Editor of the Gentleman's Magazine, vol. xiii. 1743.

MR. URBAN,

IT would not be found useless in the learned world, if in written controversies as in oral disputations, a moderator could be selected, who might, in some degree, superintend the debate, restrain all needless excursions, repress all personal reflections, and, at last, recapitulate the arguments on each side; and who, though he should not assume the province of deciding the question, might at least exhibit it in its true state.

This reflection arose in my mind upon the consideration of Mr. Crousaz's commentary on the Essay on Man, and Mr. Warburton's answer to it. The importance of the subject, the reputation and abilities of the controvertists, and, perhaps, the ardour with which each has endeavoured to support his cause, have made an attempt of this kind necessary for the information of the greatest number of Mr. Pope's readers.

Among the duties of a moderator, I have mentioned that of recalling the disputants to the subject, and cutting off the excrescences of a debate, which Mr. Crousaz will not suffer to be long unemployed, and the repression of

personal invectives which have not been very carefully avoided on either part, and are less excusable, because it has not been proved, that, either the poet, or his commentator, wrote with any other design than that of promoting happiness by cultivating reason and piety.

Mr. Warburton has, indeed, so much depressed the character of his adversary, that before I consider the controversy between them, I think it necessary to exhibit some specimens of Mr. Crousaz's sentiments, by which it will probably be shown, that he is far from deserving either indignation or contempt; that his notions are just, though they are sometimes introduced without necessity; and defended when they are not opposed; and that his abilities and piety are such as may entitle him to reverence from those who think his criticisms superfluous.

In page 35 of the English translation, he exhibits an observation which every writer ought to impress upon his mind, and which may afford a sufficient apology for his commentary.

On the notion of a ruling passion he offers this remark: "Nothing so much hinders men from obtaining a complete victory over their ruling passion, as that all the advantages gained in their days of retreat, by just and sober reflections, whether struck out by their own minds, or borrowed from good books, or from the conversation of men of merit, are destroyed in a few moments by a free intercourse and acquaintance with libertines; and, thus, the work is always to be begun anew. A gamester resolves to leave off play, by which he finds his health impaired, his family ruined, and his passions inflamed; in this resolution he persists a few days, but soon yields to an invitation, which will give his prevailing inclination an opportunity of reviving in all its force. The case is the same with other men; but is reason to be charged with these calamities and follies, or rather the man who refuses to listen to its voice in opposition to impertinent solicitations?"

On the means, recommended for the attainment of hap-

piness, he observes, " that the abilities which our Maker has given us, and the internal and external advantages with which he has invested us, are of two very different kinds; those of one kind are bestowed in common upon us and the brute creation, but the other exalt us far above other animals. To disregard any of these gifts would be ingratitude; but to neglect those of greater excellence, to go no farther than the gross satisfactions of sense, and the functions of mere animal life, would be a far greater crime. We are formed by our Creator capable of acquiring knowledge, and regulating our conduct by reasonable rules; it is, therefore, our duty to cultivate our understandings, and exalt our virtues. We need but make the experiment to find, that the greatest pleasures will arise from such endeavours.

" It is trifling to allege, in opposition to this truth, that knowledge cannot be acquired, nor virtue pursued, without toil and efforts, and that all efforts produce fatigue. God requires nothing disproportioned to the powers he has given, and in the exercise of those powers consists the highest satisfaction.

" Toil and weariness are the effects of vanity: when a man has formed a design of excelling others in merit, he is disquieted by their advances, and leaves nothing unattempted, that he may step before them: this occasions a thousand unreasonable emotions, which justly bring their punishment along with them.

" But let a man study and labour to cultivate and improve his abilities in the eye of his Maker, and with the prospect of his approbation; let him attentively reflect on the infinite value of that approbation, and the highest encomiums that men can bestow will vanish into nothing at the comparison. When we live in this manner, we find that we live for a great and glorious end.

" When this is our frame of mind, we find it no longer difficult to restrain ourselves in the gratifications of eating and drinking, the most gross enjoyments of sense. We

take what is necessary to preserve health and vigour, but are not to give ourselves up to pleasures that weaken the attention, and dull the understanding."

And the true sense of Mr. Pope's assertion, that "Whatever is, is right," and, I believe, the sense in which it was written, is thus explained:—"A sacred and adorable order is established in the government of mankind. These are certain and unvaried truths: he that seeks God, and makes it his happiness to live in obedience to him, shall obtain what he endeavours after, in a degree far above his present comprehension. He that turns his back upon his Creator, neglects to obey him, and perseveres in his disobedience, shall obtain no other happiness than he can receive from enjoyments of his own procuring; void of satisfaction, weary of life, wasted by empty cares and remorses, equally harassing and just, he will experience the certain consequences of his own choice. Thus will justice and goodness resume their empire, and that order be restored which men have broken."

I am afraid of wearying you or your readers with more quotations, but if you shall inform me that a continuation of my correspondence will be well received, I shall descend to particular passages, show how Mr. Pope gave sometimes occasion to mistakes, and how Mr. Crousaz was misled by his suspicion of the system of fatality [r].

I am, Sir, yours, &c.

[r] It does not appear that Dr. Johnson found leisure or encouragement to continue this subject any farther.

PRELIMINARY DISCOURSE

TO

THE LONDON CHRONICLE,

JANUARY 1, 1757.

IT has always been lamented, that of the little time allotted to man, much must be spent upon superfluities. Every prospect has its obstructions, which we must break to enlarge our view; every step of our progress finds impediments, which, however eager to go forward, we must stop to remove. Even those who profess to teach the way to happiness, have multiplied our encumbrances, and the author of almost every book retards his instructions by a preface.

The writers of the Chronicle hope to be easily forgiven, though they should not be free from an infection that has seized the whole fraternity, and instead of falling immediately to their subjects, should detain the reader for a time with an account of the importance of their design, the extent of their plan, and the accuracy of the method which they intend to prosecute. Such premonitions, though not always necessary when the reader has the book complete in his hand, and may find, by his own eyes, whatever can be found in it, yet may be more easily allowed to works published gradually in successive parts, of which the scheme can only be so far known as the author shall think fit to discover it.

The paper which we now invite the publick to add to the papers with which it is already rather wearied than satisfied, consists of many parts, some of which it has in common with other periodical sheets, and some peculiar to itself.

The first demand, made by the reader of a journal, is, that he should find an accurate account of foreign transactions and domestick incidents. This is always expected, but this is very rarely performed. Of those writers who have taken upon themselves the task of intelligence, some have given and others have sold their abilities, whether small or great, to one or other of the parties that divide us; and without a wish for truth or thought of decency, without care of any other reputation than that of a stubborn adherence to their abettors, carry on the same tenour of representation through all the vicissitudes of right and wrong, neither depressed by detection, nor abashed by confutation, proud of the hourly increase of infamy, and ready to boast of all the contumelies that falsehood and slander may bring upon them, as new proofs of their zeal and fidelity.

With these heroes we have no ambition to be numbered; we leave to the confessors of faction the merit of their sufferings, and are desirous to shelter ourselves under the protection of truth. That all our facts will be authentick, or all our remarks just, we dare not venture to promise: we can relate but what we hear, we can point out but what we see. Of remote transactions, the first accounts are always confused, and commonly exaggerated: and in domestick affairs, if the power to conceal is less, the interest to misrepresent is often greater; and, what is sufficiently vexatious, truth seems to fly from curiosity, and as many inquiries produce many narratives, whatever engages the publick attention is immediately disguised by the embellishments of fiction. We pretend to no peculiar power of disentangling contradiction or denuding forgery, we have no settled correspondence with the antipodes, nor maintain any spies in the cabinets of princes. But as we shall always be conscious that our mistakes are involuntary, we shall watch the gradual discoveries of time, and retract whatever we have hastily and erroneously advanced.

In the narratives of the daily writers every reader per-

ceives somewhat of neatness and purity wanting; which, at the first view, it seems easy to supply; but it must be considered, that those passages must be written in haste, and, that there is often no other choice, but that they must want either novelty or accuracy; and that, as life is very uniform, the affairs of one week are so like those of another, that by any attempt after variety of expression, invention would soon be wearied, and language exhausted. Some improvements, however, we hope to make; and for the rest we think that, when we commit only common faults, we shall not be excluded from common indulgence.

The accounts of prices of corn and stocks are to most of our readers of more importance than narratives of greater sound; and, as exactness is here within the reach of diligence, our readers may justly require it from us.

Memorials of a private and personal kind, which relate deaths, marriages, and preferments, must always be imperfect by omission, and often erroneous by misinformation; but even in these there shall not be wanting care to avoid mistakes, or to rectify them, whenever they shall be found.

That part of our work, by which it is distinguished from all others, is the literary journal, or account of the labours and productions of the learned. This was for a long time among the deficiencies of English literature; but, as the caprice of man is always starting from too little to too much, we have now, amongst other disturbers of human quiet, a numerous body of reviewers and remarkers.

Every art is improved by the emulation of competitors; those who make no advances towards excellence, may stand as warnings against faults. We shall endeavour to avoid that petulance which treats with contempt whatever has hitherto been reputed sacred. We shall repress that elation of malignity, which wantons in the cruelties of criticism, and not only murders reputation, but murders it by torture. Whenever we feel ourselves ignorant we shall at least be modest. Our intention is not to preoccupy judgment by praise or censure, but to gratify curiosity by early intelligence, and to tell rather what our authors have

attempted, than what they have performed. The titles of books are necessarily short, and, therefore, disclose but imperfectly the contents; they are sometimes fraudulent and intended to raise false expectations. In our account this brevity will be extended, and these frauds, whenever they are detected, will be exposed; for though we write without intention to injure, we shall not suffer ourselves to be made parties to deceit.

If any author shall transmit a summary of his work, we shall willingly receive it; if any literary anecdote, or curious observation, shall be communicated to us, we will carefully insert it. Many facts are known and forgotten, many observations are made and suppressed; and entertainment and instruction are frequently lost, for want of a repository in which they may be conveniently preserved.

No man can modestly promise what he cannot ascertain: we hope for the praise of knowledge and discernment, but we claim only that of diligence and candour[a].

[a] Dr. Johnson received the humble reward of a guinea from Mr. Dodsley for this composition.

INTRODUCTION

TO THE

WORLD DISPLAYED[t].

NAVIGATION, like other arts, has been perfected by degrees. It is not easy to conceive that any age or nation was without some vessel, in which rivers might be passed by travellers, or lakes frequented by fishermen; but we have no knowledge of any ship that could endure the violence of the ocean before the ark of Noah.

As the tradition of the deluge has been transmitted to almost all the nations of the earth, it must be supposed that the memory of the means, by which Noah and his family were preserved, would be continued long among their descendants, and that the possibility of passing the seas could never be doubted.

What men know to be practicable, a thousand motives will incite them to try; and there is reason to believe, that from the time that the generations of the postdiluvian race spread to the seashores, there were always navigators that ventured upon the sea, though, perhaps, not willingly beyond the sight of land.

Of the ancient voyages little certain is known, and it is not necessary to lay before the reader such conjectures as learned men have offered to the world. The Romans, by conquering Carthage, put a stop to great part of the trade of distant nations with one another, and because they

[t] A collection of Voyages and Travels, selected from the writers of all nations, in twenty small pocket volumes, and published by Newbery; to oblige whom, it is conjectured that Johnson drew up this curious and learned paper, which appeared in the first volume, 1759.

thought only on war and conquest, as their empire increased, commerce was discouraged; till under the latter emperours, ships seem to have been of little other use than to transport soldiers.

Navigation could not be carried to any great degree of certainty without the compass, which was unknown to the ancients. The wonderful quality by which a needle or small bar of steel, touched with a loadstone or magnet, and turning freely by equilibration on a point, always preserves the meridian, and directs its two ends north and south, was discovered, according to the common opinion, in 1299, by John Gola of Amalfi, a town in Italy.

From this time it is reasonable to suppose that navigation made continual, though slow, improvements, which the confusion and barbarity of the times, and the want of communication between orders of men so distant as sailors and monks, hindered from being distinctly and successively recorded.

It seems, however, that the sailors still wanted either knowledge or courage, for they continued for two centuries to creep along the coast, and considered every headland as unpassable, which ran far into the sea, and against which the waves broke with uncommon agitation.

The first who is known to have formed the design of new discoveries, or the first who had power to execute his purposes, was Don Henry the fifth[u], son of John, the first king of Portugal, and Philippina, sister of Henry the fourth of England. Don Henry, having attended his father to the conquest of Ceuta, obtained, by conversation with the inhabitants of the continent, some accounts of the interiour kingdoms and southern coast of Africa; which, though rude and indistinct, were sufficient to raise his curiosity, and convince him, that there were countries yet unknown and worthy of discovery.

He, therefore, equipped some small vessels, and commanded that they should pass, as far as they could, along

[u] Read Mickle's very excellent introduction to his translation of Camoens' Lusiad.—Ed.

that coast of Africa which looked upon the great Atlantick ocean, the immensity of which struck the gross and unskilful navigators of those times with terrour and amazement. He was not able to communicate his own ardour to his seamen, who proceeded very slowly in the new attempt; each was afraid to venture much farther than he that went before him, and ten years were spent before they had advanced beyond cape Bajador, so called from its progression into the ocean, and the circuit by which it must be doubled. The opposition of this promontory to the course of the sea, produced a violent current and high waves, into which they durst not venture, and which they had not yet knowledge enough to avoid, by standing off from the land into the open sea.

The prince was desirous to know something of the countries that lay beyond this formidable cape, and sent two commanders, named John Gonzales Zarco, and Tristan Vas, in 1418, to pass beyond Bajador, and survey the coast behind it. They were caught by a tempest, which drove them out into the unknown ocean, where they expected to perish by the violence of the wind, or, perhaps, to wander for ever in the boundless deep. At last, in the midst of their despair, they found a small island, where they sheltered themselves, and which the sense of their deliverance disposed them to call Puerto Santo, or the Holy Haven.

When they returned with an account of this new island, Henry performed a publick act of thanksgiving, and sent them again with seeds and cattle; and we are told by the Spanish historian, that they set two rabbits on shore, which increased so much in a few years, that they drove away the inhabitants, by destroying their corn and plants, and were suffered to enjoy the island without opposition.

In the second or third voyage to Puerto Santo, (for authors do not agree which,) a third captain, called Perello, was joined to the two former. As they looked round the island upon the ocean, they saw at a distance something which they took for a cloud, till they perceived that it did

not change its place. They directed their course towards it, and, in 1419, discovered another island covered with trees, which they, therefore, called Madera, or the Isle of Wood.

Madera was given to Vaz or Zarco, who set fire to the woods, which are reported by Souza to have burnt for seven years together, and to have been wasted, till want of wood was the greatest inconveniency of the place. But green wood is not very apt to burn, and the heavy rains which fall in these countries must, surely, have extinguished the conflagration, were it ever so violent.

There was yet little progress made upon the southern coast, and Henry's project was treated as chimerical by many of his countrymen. At last Gilianes, in 1433, passed the dreadful cape, to which he gave the name of Bajador, and came back, to the wonder of the nation.

In two voyages more, made in the two following years, they passed forty-two leagues farther, and in the latter, two men with horses being set on shore, wandered over the country, and found nineteen men, whom, according to the savage manners of that age, they attacked; the natives, having javelins, wounded one of the Portuguese, and received some wounds from them. At the mouth of a river they found sea-wolves in great numbers, and brought home many of their skins, which were much esteemed.

Antonio Gonzales, who had been one of the associates of Gilianes, was sent again, in 1440, to bring back a cargo of the skins of sea-wolves. He was followed in another ship by Nunno Tristam. They were now of strength sufficient to venture upon violence; they, therefore, landed, and, without either right or provocation, made all whom they seized their prisoners, and brought them to Portugal, with great commendations both from the prince and the nation.

Henry now began to please himself with the success of his projects, and, as one of his purposes was the conversion of infidels, he thought it necessary to impart his undertaking to the pope, and to obtain the sanction of eccle-

siastical authority. To this end Fernando Lopez d'Azevedo was despatched to Rome, who related to the pope and cardinals the great designs of Henry, and magnified his zeal for the propagation of religion. The pope was pleased with the narrative, and by a formal bull, conferred upon the crown of Portugal all the countries which should be discovered as far as India, together with India itself, and granted several privileges and indulgences to the churches which Henry had built in his new regions, and to the men engaged in the navigation for discovery. By this bull all other princes were forbidden to encroach upon the conquests of the Portuguese, on pain of the censures incurred by the crime of usurpation.

The approbation of the pope, the sight of men, whose manners and appearance were so different from those of Europeans, and the hope of gain from golden regions, which has been always the great incentive to hazard and discovery, now began to operate with full force. The desire of riches and of dominion, which is yet more pleasing to the fancy, filled the court of the Portuguese prince with innumerable adventurers from very distant parts of Europe. Some wanted to be employed in the search after new countries, and some to be settled in those which had been already found.

Communities now began to be animated by the spirit of enterprise, and many associations were formed for the equipment of ships, and the acquisition of the riches of distant regions, which, perhaps, were always supposed to be more wealthy, as more remote. These undertakers agreed to pay the prince a fifth part of the profit, sometimes a greater share, and sent out the armament at their own expense.

The city of Lagos was the first that carried on this design by contribution. The inhabitants fitted out six vessels, under the command of Lucarot, one of the prince's household, and soon after fourteen more were furnished for the same purpose, under the same commander; to those were added many belonging to private men, so that,

in a short time, twenty-six ships put to sea in quest of whatever fortune should present.

The ships of Lagos were soon separated by foul weather, and the rest, taking each its own course, stopped at different parts of the African coast, from cape Blanco to cape Verd. Some of them, in 1444, anchored at Gomera, one of the Canaries, where they were kindly treated by the inhabitants, who took them into their service against the people of the isle of Palma, with whom they were at war; but the Portuguese, at their return to Gomera, not being made so rich as they expected, fell upon their friends, in contempt of all the laws of hospitality and stipulations of alliance, and, making several of them prisoners and slaves, set sail for Lisbon.

The Canaries are supposed to have been known, however imperfectly, to the ancients; but, in the confusion of the subsequent ages, they were lost and forgotten, till, about the year 1340, the Biscayners found Lucarot, and invading it, (for to find a new country, and invade it has always been the same,) brought away seventy captives, and some commodities of the place. Louis de la Cerda, count of Clermont, of the blood royal both of France and Spain, nephew of John de la Cerda, who called himself the Prince of Fortune, had once a mind to settle in those islands, and applying himself first to the king of Arragon, and then to Clement the sixth, was by the pope crowned at Avignon, king of the Canaries, on condition that he should reduce them to the true religion; but the prince altered his mind, and went into France to serve against the English. The kings both of Castile and Portugal, though they did not oppose the papal grant, yet complained of it, as made without their knowledge, and in contravention of their rights.

The first settlement in the Canaries was made by John de Betancour, a French gentleman, for whom his kinsman Robin de Braquement, admiral of France, begged them, with the title of king, from Henry the magnificent of Castile, to whom he had done eminent services. John

made himself master of some of the isles, but could never conquer the grand Canary; and having spent all that he had, went back to Europe, leaving his nephew, Massiot de Betancour, to take care of his new dominion. Massiot had a quarrel with the vicar-general, and was, likewise, disgusted by the long absence of his uncle, whom the French king detained in his service, and being able to keep his ground no longer, he transferred his rights to Don Henry, in exchange for some districts in the Madera, where he settled his family.

Don Henry, when he had purchased those islands, sent thither, in 1424, two thousand five hundred foot, and a hundred and twenty horse; but the army was too numerous to be maintained by the country. The king of Castile afterwards claimed them, as conquered by his subjects under Betancour, and held under the crown of Castile by fealty and homage: his claim was allowed, and the Canaries were resigned.

It was the constant practice of Henry's navigators, when they stopped at a desert island, to land cattle upon it, and leave them to breed, where, neither wanting room nor food, they multiplied very fast, and furnished a very commodious supply to those who came afterwards to the same place. This was imitated, in some degree, by Anson, at the isle of Juan Fernandez.

The island of Madera he not only filled with inhabitants, assisted by artificers of every kind, but procured such plants as seemed likely to flourish in that climate, and introduced the sugar-canes and vines which afterwards produced a very large revenue.

The trade of Africa now began to be profitable, but a great part of the gain arose from the sale of slaves, who were annually brought into Portugal, by hundreds, as Lafitau relates, and without any appearance of indignation or compassion; they, likewise, imported gold dust in such quantities, that Alphonso the fifth coined it into a new species of money called Crusades, which is still continued in Portugal.

In time they made their way along the south coast of Africa, eastward to the country of the negroes, whom they found living in tents, without any political institutions, supporting life, with very little labour, by the milk of their kine, and millet, to which those who inhabited the coast added fish dried in the sun. Having never seen the natives, or heard of the arts of Europe, they gazed with astonishment on the ships, when they approached their coasts, sometimes thinking them birds, and sometimes fishes, according as their sails were spread or lowered; and sometimes conceiving them to be only phantoms, which played to and fro in the ocean. Such is the account given by the historian, perhaps, with too much prejudice against a negro's understanding, who, though he might well wonder at the bulk and swiftness of the first ship, would scarcely conceive it to be either a bird or a fish, but having seen many bodies floating in the water, would think it, what it really is, a large boat; and, if he had no knowledge of any means by which separate pieces of timber may be joined together, would form very wild notions concerning its construction, or, perhaps, suppose it to be a hollow trunk of a tree, from some country where trees grow to a much greater height and thickness than in his own.

When the Portuguese came to land, they increased the astonishment of the poor inhabitants, who saw men clad in iron, with thunder and lightning in their hands. They did not understand each other, and signs are a very imperfect mode of communication, even to men of more knowledge than the negroes, so that they could not easily negotiate or traffick: at last the Portuguese laid hands on some of them, to carry them home for a sample; and their dread and amazement was raised, says Lafitau, to the highest pitch, when the Europeans fired their cannons and muskets among them, and they saw their companions fall dead at their feet, without any enemy at hand, or any visible cause of their destruction.

On what occasion, or for what purpose, cannons and

muskets were discharged among a people harmless and secure, by strangers who, without any right, visited their coast, it is not thought necessary to inform us. The Portuguese could fear nothing from them, and had, therefore, no adequate provocation; nor is there any reason to believe but that they murdered the negroes in wanton merriment, perhaps, only to try how many a volley would destroy, or what would be the consternation of those that should escape. We are openly told, that they had the less scruple concerning their treatment of the savage people, because they scarcely considered them as distinct from beasts; and, indeed, the practice of all the European nations, and among others, of the English barbarians that cultivate the southern islands of America, proves, that this opinion, however absurd and foolish, however wicked and injurious, still continues to prevail. Interest and pride harden the heart, and it is in vain to dispute against avarice and power.

By these practices the first discoverers alienated the natives from them; and whenever a ship appeared, every one that could fly betook himself to the mountains and the woods, so that nothing was to be got more than they could steal: they sometimes surprised a few fishers, and made them slaves, and did what they could to offend the negroes, and enrich themselves. This practice of robbery continued till some of the negroes, who had been enslaved, learned the language of Portugal, so as to be able to interpret for their countrymen, and one John Fernandez applied himself to the negro tongue.

From this time began something like a regular traffick, such as can subsist between nations where all the power is on one side; and a factory was settled in the isle of Arguin, under the protection of a fort. The profit of this new trade was assigned, for a certain term, to Ferdinando Gomez; which seems to be the common method of establishing a trade, that is yet too small to engage the care of a nation, and can only be enlarged by that at-

tention which is bestowed by private men upon private advantage. Gomez continued the discoveries to cape Catharine, two degrees and a half beyond the line.

In the latter part of the reign of Alphonso the fifth, the ardour of discovery was somewhat intermitted, and all commercial enterprises were interrupted by the wars in which he was engaged with various success. But John the second, who succeeded, being fully convinced both of the honour and advantage of extending his dominions in countries hitherto unknown, prosecuted the designs of prince Henry with the utmost vigour, and in a short time added to his other titles, that of king of Guinea and of the coast of Africa.

In 1463, in the third year of the reign of John the second, died prince Henry, the first encourager of remote navigation, by whose incitement, patronage and example, distant nations have been made acquainted with each other, unknown countries have been brought into general view, and the power of Europe has been extended to the remotest parts of the world. What mankind has lost and gained by the genius and designs of this prince, it would be long to compare, and very difficult to estimate. Much knowledge has been acquired, and much cruelty been committed; the belief of religion has been very little propagated, and its laws have been outrageously and enormously violated, The Europeans have scarcely visited any coast, but to gratify avarice, and extend corruption; to arrogate dominion without right, and practise cruelty without incentive. Happy had it, then, been for the oppressed, if the designs of Henry had slept in his bosom, and surely more happy for the oppressors. But there is reason to hope that out of so much evil, good may sometimes be produced; and that the light of the gospel will at last illuminate the sands of Africa, and the deserts of America, though its progress cannot but be slow, when it is so much obstructed by the lives of Christians.

The death of Henry did not interrupt the progress of king John, who was very strict in his injunctions, not only

to make discoveries, but to secure possession of the countries that were found. The practice of the first navigators was only to raise a cross upon the coast, and to carve upon trees the device of Don Henry, the name which they thought it proper to give to the new coast, and any other information, for those that might happen to follow them; but now they began to erect piles of stone with a cross on the top, and engraved on the stone the arms of Portugal, the name of the king, and of the commander of the ship, with the day and year of the discovery. This was accounted sufficient to prove their claim to the new lands; which might be pleaded, with justice enough, against any other Europeans, and the rights of the original inhabitants were never taken into notice. Of these stone records, nine more were erected in the reign of king John, along the coast of Africa, as far as the cape of Good Hope.

The fortress in the isle of Arguin was finished, and it was found necessary to build another at S. Georgio de la Mina, a few degrees north of the line, to secure the trade of gold dust, which was chiefly carried on at that place. For this purpose a fleet was fitted out, of ten large and three smaller vessels, freighted with materials for building the fort, and with provisions and ammunition for six hundred men, of whom one hundred were workmen and labourers. Father Lafitau relates, in very particular terms, that these ships carried hewn stones, bricks, and timber, for the fort, so that nothing remained but barely to erect it. He does not seem to consider how small a fort could be made out of the lading of ten ships.

The command of this fleet was given to Don Diego d'Azambue, who set sail December 11, 1481, and reaching La Mina January 19, 1482, gave immediate notice of his arrival to Caramansa, a petty prince of that part of the country, whom he very earnestly invited to an immediate conference.

Having received a message of civility from the negro chief, he landed, and chose a rising ground, proper for his

intended fortress, on which he planted a banner with the arms of Portugal, and took possession in the name of his master. He then raised an altar at the foot of a great tree, on which mass was celebrated, the whole assembly, says Lafitau, breaking out into tears of devotion at the prospect of inviting these barbarous nations to the profession of the true faith. Being secure of the goodness of the end, they had no scruple about the means, nor ever considered how differently from the primitive martyrs and apostles they were attempting to make proselytes. The first propagators of Christianity recommended their doctrines by their sufferings and virtues; they entered no defenceless territories with swords in their hands; they built no forts upon ground to which they had no right, nor polluted the purity of religion with the avarice of trade, or insolence of power.

What may still raise higher the indignation of a Christian mind, this purpose of propagating truth appears never to have been seriously pursued by any European nation; no means, whether lawful or unlawful, have been practised with diligence and perseverance for the conversion of savages. When a fort is built, and a factory established, there remains no other care than to grow rich. It is soon found that ignorance is most easily kept in subjection, and that by enlightening the mind with truth, fraud and usurpation would be made less practicable and less secure.

In a few days an interview was appointed between Caramansa and Azambue. The Portuguese uttered, by his interpreter, a pompous speech, in which he made the negro prince large offers of his master's friendship, exhorting him to embrace the religion of his new ally; and told him, that, as they came to form a league of friendship with him, it was necessary that they should build a fort, which might serve as a retreat from their common enemies, and in which the Portuguese might be always at hand to lend him assistance.

The negro, who seemed very well to understand what the admiral intended, after a short pause, returned an

answer full of respect to the king of Portugal, but appeared a little doubtful what to determine with relation to the fort. The commander saw his diffidence, and used all his art of persuasion to overcome it. Caramansa, either induced by hope, or constrained by fear, either desirous to make them friends, or not daring to make them enemies, consented, with a show of joy, to that which it was not in his power to refuse; and the new comers began the next day to break the ground for the foundation of a fort.

Within the limit of their intended fortification were some spots appropriated to superstitious practices; which the negroes no sooner perceived in danger of violation by the spade and pickaxe, than they ran to arms, and began to interrupt the work. The Portuguese persisted in their purpose, and there had soon been tumult and bloodshed, had not the admiral, who was at a distance to superintend the unlading the materials for the edifice, been informed of the danger. He was told, at the same time, that the support of their superstition was only a pretence, and that all their rage might be appeased by the presents which the prince expected, the delay of which had greatly offended him.

The Portuguese admiral immediately ran to his men, prohibited all violence, and stopped the commotion; he then brought out the presents, and spread them with great pomp before the prince; if they were of no great value, they were rare, for the negroes had never seen such wonders before; they were, therefore, received with ecstacy, and, perhaps, the Portuguese derided them for their fondness of trifles, without considering how many things derive their value only from their scarcity, and that gold and rubies would be trifles, if nature had scattered them with less frugality.

The work was now peaceably continued, and such was the diligence with which the strangers hastened to secure the possession of the country, that in twenty days they had sufficiently fortified themselves against the hostility of the negroes. They then proceeded to complete their design.

A church was built in the place where the first altar had been raised, on which a mass was established to be celebrated for ever once a day, for the repose of the soul of Henry, the first mover of these discoveries.

In this fort the admiral remained with sixty soldiers, and sent back the rest in the ships, with gold, slaves, and other commodities. It may be observed that slaves were never forgotten, and that, wherever they went, they gratified their pride, if not their avarice, and brought some of the natives, when it happened that they brought nothing else.

The Portuguese endeavoured to extend their dominions still farther. They had gained some knowledge of the Jaloffs, a nation inhabiting the coast of Guinea, between the Gambia and Senegal. The king of the Jaloffs being vicious and luxurious, committed the care of the government to Bemoin, his brother by the mother's side, in preference to two other brothers by his father. Bemoin, who wanted neither bravery nor prudence, knew that his station was invidious and dangerous, and, therefore, made an alliance with the Portuguese, and retained them in his defence by liberality and kindness. At last the king was killed by the contrivance of his brothers, and Bemoin was to lose his power, or maintain it by war.

He had recourse, in this exigence, to his great ally the king of Portugal, who promised to support him, on condition that he should become a Christian, and sent an ambassador, accompanied with missionaries. Bemoin promised all that was required, objecting only, that the time of a civil war was not a proper season for a change of religion, which would alienate his adherents; but said, that when he was once peaceably established, he would not only embrace the true religion himself, but would endeavour the conversion of the kingdom.

This excuse was admitted, and Bemoin delayed his conversion for a year, renewing his promise from time to time. But the war was unsuccessful, trade was at a stand, and Bemoin was not able to pay the money which he had borrowed of the Portuguese merchants, who sent intelli-

gence to Lisbon of his delays, and received an order from the king, commanding them, under severe penalties, to return home.

Bemoin here saw his ruin approaching, and, hoping that money would pacify all resentment, borrowed of his friends a sum sufficient to discharge his debts; and finding that even this enticement would not delay the departure of the Portuguese, he embarked his nephew in their ships with a hundred slaves, whom he presented to the king of Portugal, to solicit his assistance. The effect of this embassy he could not stay to know; for being soon after deposed, he sought shelter in the fortress of Arguin, whence he took shipping for Portugal, with twenty-five of his principal followers.

The king of Portugal pleased his own vanity and that of his subjects, by receiving him with great state and magnificence, as a mighty monarch who had fled to an ally for succour in misfortune. All the lords and ladies of the court were assembled, and Bemoin was conducted with a splendid attendance into the hall of audience, where the king rose from his throne to welcome him. Bemoin then made a speech with great ease and dignity, representing his unhappy state, and imploring the favour of his powerful ally. The king was touched with his affliction, and struck by his wisdom.

The conversion of Bemoin was much desired by the king; and it was, therefore, immediately, proposed to him that he should become a Christian. Ecclesiasticks were sent to instruct him; and having now no more obstacles from interest, he was easily persuaded to declare himself whatever would please those on whom he now depended. He was baptized on the third day of December, 1489, in the palace of the queen, with great magnificence, and named John, after the king.

Some time was spent in feasts and sports on this great occasion, and the negroes signalized themselves by many feats of agility, far surpassing the power of Europeans, who, having more helps of art, are less diligent to cultivate the

qualities of nature. In the mean time twenty large ships were fitted out, well manned, stored with ammunition, and laden with materials necessary for the erection of a fort. With this powerful armament were sent a great number of missionaries under the direction of Alvarez the king's confessor. The command of this force, which filled the coast of Africa with terrour, was given to Pedro Vaz d'Acugna, surnamed Bisagu; who, soon after they had landed, not being well pleased with his expedition, put an end to its inconveniencies, by stabbing Bemoin suddenly to the heart. The king heard of this outrage with great sorrow, but did not attempt to punish the murderer.

The king's concern for the restoration of Bemoin was not the mere effect of kindness, he hoped by his help to facilitate greater designs. He now began to form hopes of finding a way to the East Indies, and of enriching his country by that gainful commerce: this he was encouraged to believe practicable, by a map which the Moors had given to prince Henry, and which subsequent discoveries have shown to be sufficiently near to exactness, where a passage round the south-east part of Africa was evidently described.

The king had another scheme, yet more likely to engage curiosity, and not irreconcilable with his interest. The world had, for some time, been filled with the report of a powerful Christian prince, called Prester John, whose country was unknown, and whom some, after Paulus Venetus, supposed to reign in the midst of Asia, and others in the depth of Ethiopia, between the ocean and Red sea. The account of the African Christians was confirmed by some Abyssinians who had travelled into Spain, and by some friars that had visited the Holy Land; and the king was extremely desirous of their correspondence and alliance.

Some obscure intelligence had been obtained, which made it seem probable that a way might be found from the countries lately discovered, to those of this far-famed monarch. In 1486, an ambassador came from the king of

Bemin, to desire that preachers might be sent to instruct him and his subjects in the true religion. He related that, in the inland country, three hundred and fifty leagues eastward from Bemin, was a mighty monarch, called Ogane, who had jurisdiction, both spiritual and temporal, over other kings; that the king of Bemin and his neighbours, at their accession, sent ambassadors to him with rich presents, and received from him the investiture of their dominions, and the marks of sovereignty, which were a kind of sceptre, a helmet, and a latten cross, without which they could not be considered as lawful kings; that this great prince was never seen but on the day of audience, and then held out one of his feet to the ambassador, who kissed it with great reverence, and who, at his departure, had a cross of latten hung on his neck, which ennobled him thenceforward, and exempted him from all servile offices.

Bemoin had, likewise, told the king, that to the east of the kingdom of Tombut, there was, among other princes, one that was neither Mahometan nor idolater, but who seemed to profess a religion nearly resembling the Christian. These informations, compared with each other, and with the current accounts of Prester John, induced the king to an opinion, which, though formed somewhat at hazard, is still believed to be right, that by passing up the river Senegal his dominions would be found. It was, therefore, ordered that, when the fortress was finished, an attempt should be made to pass upward to the source of the river. The design failed then, and has never yet succeeded.

Other ways, likewise, were tried of penetrating to the kingdom of Prester John; for the king resolved to leave neither sea nor land unsearched, till he should be found. The two messengers who were sent first on this design, went to Jerusalem, and then returned, being persuaded that, for want of understanding the language of the country, it would be vain or impossible to travel farther. Two more were then despatched, one of whom was Pedro de Covillan, the other, Alphonso de Pavia; they passed from

Naples to Alexandria, and then travelled to Cairo, from whence they went to Aden, a town of Arabia, on the Red sea, near its mouth. From Aden, Pavia set sail for Ethiopia, and Covillan for the Indies. Covillan visited Canavar, Calicut, and Goa in the Indies, and Sosula in the eastern Africa, thence he returned to Aden, and then to Cairo, where he had agreed to meet Pavia. At Cairo he was informed that Pavia was dead, but he met with two Portuguese Jews, one of whom had given the king an account of the situation and trade of Ormus: they brought orders to Covillan, that he should send one of them home with the journal of his travels, and go to Ormus with the other.

Covillan obeyed the orders, sending an exact account of his adventures to Lisbon, and proceeding with the other messenger to Ormus; where, having made sufficient inquiry, he sent his companion homewards, with the caravans that were going to Aleppo, and embarking once more on the Red sea, arrived in time at Abyssinia, and found the prince whom he had sought so long, and with such danger.

Two ships were sent out upon the same search, of which Bartholomew Diaz had the chief command; they were attended by a smaller vessel laden with provisions, that they might not return, upon pretence of want either felt or feared.

Navigation was now brought nearer to perfection. The Portuguese claim the honour of many inventions by which the sailor is assisted, and which enable him to leave sight of land, and commit himself to the boundless ocean. Diaz had orders to proceed beyond the river Zaire, where Diego Can had stopped, to build monuments of his discoveries, and to leave upon the coasts negro men and women well instructed, who might inquire after Prester John, and fill the natives with reverence for the Portuguese.

Diaz, with much opposition from his crew, whose mutinies he repressed, partly by softness, and partly by steadi-

ness, sailed on till he reached the utmost point of Africa, which from the bad weather that he met there, he called cabo Tormentoso, or the cape of Storms. He would have gone forward, but his crew forced him to return. In his way back he met the victualler, from which he had been parted nine months before; of the nine men, which were in it at the separation, six had been killed by the negroes, and of the three remaining, one died for joy at the sight of his friends. Diaz returned to Lisbon in December, 1487, and gave an account of his voyage to the king, who ordered the cape of Storms to be called thenceforward cabo de Buena Esperanza, or the cape of Good Hope.

Some time before the expedition of Diaz, the river Zaire and the kingdom of Congo had been discovered by Diego Can, who found a nation of negroes who spoke a language which those that were in his ships could not understand. He landed, and the natives, whom he expected to fly, like the other inhabitants of the coast, met them with confidence, and treated them with kindness; but Diego, finding that they could not understand each other, seized some of their chiefs, and carried them to Portugal, leaving some of his own people in their room to learn the language of Congo.

The negroes were soon pacified, and the Portuguese left to their mercy were well treated; and, as they by degrees grew able to make themselves understood, recommended themselves, their nation, and their religion. The king of Portugal sent Diego back in a very short time with the negroes whom he had forced away; and when they were set safe on shore, the king of Congo conceived so much esteem for Diego, that he sent one of those, who had returned, back again in the ship to Lisbon, with two young men despatched as ambassadors, to desire instructers to be sent for the conversion of his kingdom.

The ambassadors were honourably received, and baptized with great pomp, and a fleet was immediately fitted out for Congo, under the command of Gonsalvo Sorza,

who dying in his passage, was succeeded in authority by his nephew Roderigo.

When they came to land, the king's uncle, who commanded the province, immediately requested to be solemnly initiated into the Christian religion, which was granted to him and his young son, on Easter day, 1491. The father was named Manuel, and the son Antonio. Soon afterwards the king, queen, and eldest prince, received at the font the names of John, Eleanor, and Alphonso; and a war breaking out, the whole army was admitted to the rites of Christianity, and then sent against the enemy. They returned victorious, but soon forgot their faith, and formed a conspiracy to restore paganism; a powerful opposition was raised by infidels and apostates, headed by one of the king's younger sons; and the missionaries had been destroyed, had not Alphonso pleaded for them and for Christianity.

The enemies of religion now became the enemies of Alphonso, whom they accused to his father of disloyalty. His mother, queen Eleanor, gained time by one artifice after another, till the king was calmed; he then heard the cause again, declared his son innocent, and punished his accusers with death.

The king died soon after, and the throne was disputed by Alphonso, supported by the Christians, and Aquitimo his brother, followed by the infidels. A battle was fought, Aquitimo was taken and put to death, and Christianity was for a time established in Congo; but the nation has relapsed into its former follies.

Such was the state of the Portuguese navigation, when, in 1492, Columbus made the daring and prosperous voyage, which gave a new world to European curiosity and European cruelty. He had offered his proposal, and declared his expectations to king John of Portugal, who had slighted him as a fanciful and rash projector, that promised what he had not reasonable hopes to perform. Columbus had solicited other princes, and had been repulsed with the same indignity; at last, Isabella of Arragon furnished

him with ships, and having found America, he entered the mouth of the Tagus in his return, and showed the natives of the new country. When he was admitted to the king's presence, he acted and talked with so much haughtiness, and reflected on the neglect which he had undergone with so much acrimony, that the courtiers, who saw their prince insulted, offered to destroy him; but the king, who knew that he deserved the reproaches that had been used, and who now sincerely regretted his incredulity, would suffer no violence to be offered him, but dismissed him with presents and with honours.

The Portuguese and Spaniards became now jealous of each other's claim to countries which neither had yet seen; and the pope, to whom they appealed, divided the new world between them by a line drawn from north to south, a hundred leagues westward from cape Verd and the Azores, giving all that lies west from that line to the Spaniards, and all that lies east to the Portuguese. This was no satisfactory division, for the east and west must meet at last, but that time was then at a great distance.

According to this grant, the Portuguese continued their discoveries eastward, and became masters of much of the coast both of Africa and the Indies; but they seized much more than they could occupy, and while they were under the dominion of Spain, lost the greater part of their Indian territories.

THE PREFACE

TO THE PRECEPTOR,

CONTAINING

A GENERAL PLAN OF EDUCATION[x].

THE importance of education is a point so generally understood and confessed, that it would be of little use to attempt any new proof or illustration of its necessity and advantages.

At a time, when so many schemes of education have been projected, so many proposals offered to the publick, so many schools opened for general knowledge, and so many lectures in particular sciences attended; at a time when mankind seems intent rather upon familiarizing than enlarging the several arts; and every age, sex, and profession, is invited to an acquaintance with those studies, which were formerly supposed accessible only to such as had devoted themselves to literary leisure, and dedicated their powers to philosophical inquiries; it seems rather requisite that an apology should be made for any further attempt to smooth a path so frequently beaten, or to recommend attainments so ardently pursued, and so officiously directed.

That this general desire may not be frustrated, our schools seem yet to want some book, which may excite curiosity by its variety, encourage diligence by its facility, and reward application by its usefulness. In examining the treatises, hitherto offered to the youth of this nation,

[x] In this year. 1748, Mr. Dodsley brought out his Preceptor, one of the most valuable books for the improvement of young minds, that has appeared in any language; and to this meritorious work Johnson furnished the preface. Boswell's Life of Johnson, i.

there appeared none that did not fail in one or other of these essential qualities; none that were not either unpleasing, or abstruse, or crowded with learning very rarely applicable to the purposes of common life.

Every man, who has been engaged in teaching, knows with how much difficulty youthful minds are confined to close application, and how readily they deviate to any thing, rather than attend to that which is imposed as a task. That this disposition, when it becomes inconsistent with the forms of education, is to be checked, will readily be granted; but since, though it may be in some degree obviated, it cannot wholly be suppressed, it is surely rational to turn it to advantage, by taking care that the mind shall never want objects on which its faculties may be usefully employed. It is not impossible, that this restless desire of novelty, which gives so much trouble to the teacher, may be often the struggle of the understanding starting from that to which it is not by nature adapted, and travelling in search of something on which it may fix with greater satisfaction. For, without supposing each man particularly marked out by his genius for particular performances, it may be easily conceived, that when a numerous class of boys is confined indiscriminately to the same forms of composition, the repetition of the same words, or the explication of the same sentiments, the employment must, either by nature or accident, be less suitable to some than others; that the ideas to be contemplated may be too difficult for the apprehension of one, and too obvious for that of another: they may be such as some understandings cannot reach, though others look down upon them, as below their regard. Every mind, in its progress through the different stages of scholastick learning, must be often in one of these conditions; must either flag with the labour, or grow wanton with the facility of the work assigned; and in either state it naturally turns aside from the track before it. Weariness looks out for relief, and leisure for employment, and, surely, it is rational to indulge the wanderings of both. For the faculties

which are too lightly burdened with the business of the day, may, with great propriety, add to it some other inquiry; and he that finds himself overwearied by a task, which, perhaps, with all his efforts, he is not able to perform, is undoubtedly to be justified in addicting himself rather to easier studies, and endeavouring to quit that which is above his attainment, for that which nature has not made him incapable of pursuing with advantage.

That, therefore, this roving curiosity may not be unsatisfied, it seems necessary to scatter in its way such allurements as may withhold it from an useless and unbounded dissipation; such as may regulate it without violence, and direct it without restraint; such as may suit every inclination, and fit every capacity; may employ the stronger genius, by operations of reason, and engage the less active or forcible mind, by supplying it with easy knowledge, and obviating that despondence, which quickly prevails, when nothing appears but a succession of difficulties, and one labour only ceases that another may be imposed.

A book, intended thus to correspond with all dispositions, and afford entertainment for minds of different powers, is necessarily to contain treatises on different subjects. As it is designed for schools, though for the higher classes, it is confined wholly to such parts of knowledge as young minds may comprehend; and, as it is drawn up for readers yet unexperienced in life, and unable to distinguish the useful from the ostentatious or unnecessary parts of science, it is requisite that a very nice distinction should be made, that nothing unprofitable should be admitted for the sake of pleasure, nor any arts of attraction neglected, that might fix the attention upon more important studies.

These considerations produced the book which is here offered to the publick, as better adapted to the great design of pleasing by instruction, than any which has hitherto been admitted into our seminaries of literature. There are not indeed wanting in the world compendiums of

science, but many were written at a time when philosophy was imperfect, as that of G. Valla; many contain only naked schemes, or synoptical tables, as that of Stierius; and others are too large and voluminous, as that of Alstedius; and, what is not to be considered as the least objection, they are generally in a language, which, to boys, is more difficult than the subject; and it is too hard a task to be condemned to learn a new science in an unknown tongue. As in life, so in study, it is dangerous to do more things than one at a time; and the mind is not to be harassed with unnecessary obstructions, in a way, of which the natural and unavoidable asperity is such as too frequently produces despair.

If the language, however, had been the only objection to any of the volumes already extant, the schools might have been supplied at a small expense by a translation; but none could be found that was not so defective, redundant, or erroneous, as to be of more danger than use. It was necessary then to examine, whether upon every single science there was not some treatise written for the use of scholars, which might be adapted to this design, so that a collection might be made from different authors, without the necessity of writing new systems. This search was not wholly without success; for two authors were found, whose performances might be admitted with little alteration. But so widely does this plan differ from all others, so much has the state of many kinds of learning been changed, or so unfortunately have they hitherto been cultivated, that none of the other subjects were explained in such a manner as was now required; and, therefore, neither care nor expense has been spared to obtain new lights, and procure to this book the merit of an original.

With-what judgment the design has been formed, and with what skill it has been executed, the learned world is now to determine. But before sentence shall pass, it is proper to explain more fully what has been intended, that censure may not be incurred by the omission of that which the original plan did not comprehend; to declare more

particularly who they are to whose instructions these treatises pretend, that a charge of arrogance and presumption may be obviated; to lay down the reasons which directed the choice of the several subjects; and to explain more minutely the manner in which each particular part of these volumes is to be used.

The title has already declared, that these volumes are particularly intended for the use of schools, and, therefore, it has been the care of the authors to explain the several sciences, of which they have treated, in the most familiar manner; for the mind, used only to common expressions, and inaccurate ideas, does not suddenly conform itself to scholastick modes of reasoning, or conceive the nice distinctions of a subtile philosophy, and may be properly initiated in speculative studies by an introduction like this, in which the grossness of vulgar conception is avoided, without the observation of metaphysical exactness. It is observed, that in the course of the natural world no change is instantaneous, but all its vicissitudes are gradual and slow; the motions of intellect proceed in the like imperceptible progression, and proper degrees of transition from one study to another are, therefore, necessary; but let it not be charged upon the writers of this book, that they intended to exhibit more than the dawn of knowledge, or pretended to raise in the mind any nobler product than the blossoms of science, which more powerful institutions may ripen into fruit.

For this reason it must not be expected, that in the following pages should be found a complete circle of the sciences; or that any authors, now deservedly esteemed, should be rejected to make way for what is here offered. It was intended by the means of these precepts, not to deck the mind with ornaments, but to protect it from nakedness; not to enrich it with affluence, but to supply it with necessaries. The inquiry, therefore, was not what degrees of knowledge are desirable, but what are in most stations of life indispensably required; and the choice was determined, not by the splendour of any part of

literature, but by the extent of its use, and the inconvenience which its neglect was likely to produce.

1. The prevalence of this consideration appears in the first part, which is appropriated to the humble purposes of teaching to read, and speak, and write letters; an attempt of little magnificence, but in which no man needs to blush for having employed his time, if honour be estimated by use. For precepts of this kind, however neglected, extend their importance as far as men are found who communicate their thoughts one to another; they are equally useful to the highest and the lowest; they may often contribute to make ignorance less inelegant; and may it not be observed, that they are frequently wanted for the embellishment even of learning?

In order to show the proper use of this part, which consists of various exemplifications of such differences of style as require correspondent diversities of pronunciation, it will be proper to inform the scholar, that there are, in general, three forms of style, each of which demands its particular mode of elocution: the familiar, the solemn, and the pathetick. That in the familiar, he that reads is only to talk with a paper in his hand, and to indulge himself in all the lighter liberties of voice, as when he reads the common articles of a newspaper, or a cursory letter of intelligence or business. That the solemn style, such as that of a serious narrative, exacts an uniform steadiness of speech, equal, clear, and calm. That for the pathetick, such as an animated oration, it is necessary the voice be regulated by the sense, varying and rising with the passions. These rules, which are the most general, admit a great number of subordinate observations, which must be particularly adapted to every scholar; for it is observable, that though very few read well, yet every man errs in a different way. But let one remark never be omitted: inculcate strongly to every scholar the danger of copying the voice of another; an attempt which, though it has been often repeated, is always unsuccessful.

The importance of writing letters with propriety, justly claims to be considered with care, since, next to the power

of pleasing with his presence, every man would wish to be able to give delight at a distance. This great art should be diligently taught, the rather, because of those letters which are most useful, and by which the general business of life is transacted, there are no examples easily to be found. It seems the general fault of those who undertake this part of education, that they propose for the exercise of their scholars, occasions which rarely happen; such as congratulations and condolences, and neglect those without which life cannot proceed. It is possible to pass many years without the necessity of writing panegyricks or epithalamiums; but every man has frequent occasion to state a contract, or demand a debt, or make a narrative of some minute incidents of common life. On these subjects, therefore, young persons should be taught to think justly, and write clearly, neatly, and succinctly, lest they come from school into the world without any acquaintance with common affairs, and stand idle spectators of mankind, in expectation that some great event will give them an opportunity to exert their rhetorick.

2. The second place is assigned to geometry; on the usefulness of which it is unnecessary to expatiate in an age when mathematical studies have so much engaged the attention of all classes of men. This treatise is one of those which have been borrowed, being a translation from the work of Mr. Le Clerc; and is not intended as more than the first initiation. In delivering the fundamental principles of geometry, it is necessary to proceed by slow steps, that each proposition may be fully understood before another is attempted. For which purpose it is not sufficient, that when a question is asked in the words of the book, the scholar, likewise, can in the words of the book return the proper answer; for this may be only an act of memory, not of understanding: it is always proper to vary the words of the question, to place the proposition in different points of view, and to require of the learner an explanation in his own terms, informing him, however, when they are improper. By this method the scholar will be-

come cautious and attentive, and the master will know with certainty the degree of his proficiency. Yet, though this rule is generally right, I cannot but recommend a precept of Pardie's[y], that when the student cannot be made to comprehend some particular part, it should be, for that time, laid aside, till new light shall arise from subsequent observation.

When this compendium is completely understood, the scholar may proceed to the perusal of Tacquet, afterwards of Euclid himself, and then of the modern improvers of geometry, such as Barrow, Keil, and Sir Isaac Newton.

3. The necessity of some acquaintance with geography and astronomy will not be disputed. If the pupil is born to the ease of a large fortune, no part of learning is more necessary to him than the knowledge of the situation of nations, on which their interests generally depend; if he is dedicated to any of the learned professions, it is scarcely possible that he will not be obliged to apply himself, in some part of his life, to these studies, as no other branch of literature can be fully comprehended without them; if he is designed for the arts of commerce or agriculture, some general acquaintance with these sciences will be found extremely useful to him; in a word, no studies afford more extensive, more wonderful, or more pleasing scenes; and, therefore, there can be no ideas impressed upon the soul, which can more conduce to its future entertainment.

In the pursuit of these sciences, it will be proper to proceed with the same gradation and caution as in geometry. And it is always of use to decorate the nakedness of science, by interspersing such observations and narratives as may amuse the mind, and excite curiosity. Thus, in explaining the state of the polar regions, it might be fit to

[y] "And albeit the reader shall not at any one day (do what he can) reach to the meaning of our author, or of our commentaries, yet let him not discourage himself, but proceed; for, on some other day, in some other place, that doubt will be cleared," This is the advice of Lord Coke to the student bewildered in the mazes of legal investigation. Preface to the first Institute.

read the narrative of the Englishmen that wintered in Greenland, which will make young minds sufficiently curious after the cause of such a length of night, and intenseness of cold; and many stratagems of the same kind might be practised to interest them in all parts of their studies, and call in their passions to animate their inquiries. When they have read this treatise, it will be proper to recommend to them Varenius's Geography, and Ferguson's Astronomy.

4. The study of chronology and history seems to be one of the most natural delights of the human mind. It is not easy to live, without inquiring by what means every thing was brought into the state in which we now behold it, or without finding in the mind some desire of being informed, concerning the generations of mankind that have been in possession of the world before us, whether they were better or worse than ourselves; or what good or evil has been derived to us from their schemes, practices, and institutions. These are inquiries which history alone can satisfy; and history can only be made intelligible by some knowledge of chronology, the science by which events are ranged in their order, and the periods of computation are settled; and which, therefore, assists the memory by method, and enlightens the judgment by showing the dependence of one transaction on another. Accordingly it should be diligently inculcated to the scholar, that, unless he fixes in his mind some idea of the time in which each man of eminence lived, and each action was performed, with some part of the contemporary history of the rest of the world, he will consume his life in useless reading, and darken his mind with a crowd of unconnected events; his memory will be perplexed with distant transactions resembling one another, and his reflections be like a dream in a fever, busy and turbulent, but confused and indistinct.

The technical part of chronology, or the art of computing and adjusting time, as it is very difficult, so it is not of absolute necessity, but should, however, be taught, so far

as it can be learned without the loss of those hours which are required for attainments of nearer concern. The student may join with this treatise Le Clerc's Compendium of History; and afterwards may, for the historical part of chronology, procure Helvicus's and Isaacson's Tables; and, if he is desirous of attaining the technical part, may first peruse Holder's Account of Time, Hearne's Ductor Historicus, Strauchius, the first part of Petavius's Rationarium Temporum; and, at length, Scaliger de Emendatione Temporum. And, for instruction in the method of his historical studies, he may consult Hearne's Ductor Historicus, Wheare's Lectures, Rawlinson's Directions for the Study of History; and, for ecclesiastical history, Cave and Dupin, Baronius and Fleury.

5. Rhetorick and poetry supply life with its highest intellectual pleasures; and, in the hands of virtue, are of great use for the impression of just sentiments, and recommendation of illustrious examples. In the practice of these great arts, so much more is the effect of nature than the effect of education, that nothing is attempted here but to teach the mind some general heads of observation, to which the beautiful passages of the best writers may commonly be reduced. In the use of this, it is not proper that the teacher should confine himself to the examples before him; for, by that method, he will never enable his pupils to make just application of the rules; but, having inculcated the true meaning of each figure, he should require them to exemplify it by their own observations, pointing to them the poem, or, in longer works, the book or canto in which an example may be found, and leaving them to discover the particular passage, by the light of the rules which they have lately learned.

For a farther progress in these studies, they may consult Quintilian, and Vossius's Rhetorick; the art of poetry will be best learned from Bossu and Bohours in French, together with Dryden's Essays and Prefaces, the critical Papers of Addison, Spence on Pope's Odyssey, and Trapp's Prælectiones Poeticæ: but a more accurate and philoso-

phical account is expected from a commentary upon Aristotle's Art of Poetry, with which the literature of this nation will be, in a short time, augmented.

6. With regard to the practice of drawing, it is not necessary to give any directions, the use of the treatise being only to teach the proper method of imitating the figures which are annexed. It will be proper to incite the scholars to industry, by showing in other books the use of the art, and informing them how much it assists the apprehension, and relieves the memory; and if they are obliged sometimes to write descriptions of engines, utensils, or any complex pieces of workmanship, they will more fully apprehend the necessity of an expedient which so happily supplies the defects of language, and enables the eye to conceive what cannot be conveyed to the mind any other way. When they have read this treatise, and practised upon these figures, their theory may be improved by the Jesuit's Perspective, and their manual operations by other figures which may be easily procured.

7. Logick, or the art of arranging and connecting ideas, of forming and examining arguments, is universally allowed to be an attainment, in the utmost degree, worthy the ambition of that being whose highest honour is to be endued with reason; but it is doubted whether that ambition has yet been gratified, and whether the powers of ratiocination have been much improved by any systems of art, or methodical institutions. The logick, which for so many ages kept possession of the schools, has at last been condemned as a mere art of wrangling, of very little use in the pursuit of truth; and later writers have contented themselves with giving an account of the operations of the mind, marking the various stages of her progress, and giving some general rules for the regulation of her conduct. The method of these writers is here followed; but without a servile adherence to any, and with endeavours to make improvements upon all. This work, however laborious, has yet been fruitless, if there be truth in an observation very frequently made, that logicians out of the school do

not reason better than men unassisted by those lights which their science is supposed to bestow. It is not to be doubted but that logicians may be sometimes overborne by their passions, or blinded by their prejudices; and that a man may reason ill, as he may act ill, not because he does not know what is right, but because he does not regard it; yet it is no more the fault of his art that it does not direct him, when his attention is withdrawn from it, than it is the defect of his sight that he misses his way, when he shuts his eyes. Against this cause of errour there is no provision to be made, otherwise than by inculcating the value of truth, and the necessity of conquering the passions. But logick may, likewise, fail to produce its effects upon common occasions, for want of being frequently and familiarly applied, till its precepts may direct the mind imperceptibly, as the fingers of a musician are regulated by his knowledge of the tune. This readiness of recollection is only to be procured by frequent impression; and, therefore, it will be proper, when logick has been once learned, the teacher take frequent occasion, in the most easy and familiar conversation, to observe when its rules are preserved, and when they are broken; and that afterwards he read no authors, without exacting of his pupil an account of every remarkable exemplification or breach of the laws of reasoning.

When this system has been digested, if it be thought necessary to proceed farther in the study of method, it will be proper to recommend Crousaz, Watts, Le Clerc, Wolfius, and Locke's Essay on Human Understanding; and if there be imagined any necessity of adding the peripatetick logick, which has been, perhaps, condemned without a candid trial, it will be convenient to proceed to Sanderson, Wallis, Crackanthorp, and Aristotle.

8. To excite a curiosity after the works of God, is the chief design of the small specimen of natural history inserted in this collection; which, however, may be sufficient to put the mind in motion, and in some measure to direct its steps; but its effects may easily be improved by

a philosophick master, who will every day find a thousand opportunities of turning the attention of his scholars to the contemplation of the objects that surround them, of laying open the wonderful art with which every part of the universe is formed, and the providence which governs the vegetable and animal creation. He may lay before them the Religious Philosopher, Ray, Derham's Physico-Theology, together with the Spectacle de la Nature; and in time recommend to their perusal Rondoletius, Aldrovandus, and Linnæus.

9. But how much soever the reason may be strengthened by logick, or the conceptions of the mind enlarged by the study of nature, it is necessary the man be not suffered to dwell upon them so long as to neglect the study of himself, the knowledge of his own station in the ranks of being, and his various relations to the innumerable multitudes which surround him, and with which his Maker has ordained him to be united for the reception and communication of happiness. To consider these aright is of the greatest importance, since from these arise duties which he cannot neglect. Ethicks, or morality, therefore, is one of the studies which ought to begin with the first glimpse of reason, and only end with life itself. Other acquisitions are merely temporary benefits, except as they contribute to illustrate the knowledge, and confirm the practice of morality and piety, which extend their influence beyond the grave, and increase our happiness through endless duration.

This great science, therefore, must be inculcated with care and assiduity, such as its importance ought to incite in reasonable minds; and for the prosecution of this design, fit opportunities are always at hand. As the importance of logick is to be shown by detecting false arguments, the excellence of morality is to be displayed by proving the deformity, the reproach, and the misery of all deviations from it. Yet it is to be remembered, that the laws of mere morality are of no coercive power; and, however they may, by conviction, of their fitness please the

reasoner in the shade, when the passions stagnate without impulse, and the appetites are secluded from their objects, they will be of little force against the ardour of desire, or the vehemence of rage, amidst the pleasures and tumults of the world. To counteract the power of temptations, hope must be excited by the prospect of rewards, and fear by the expectation of punishment; and virtue may owe her panegyricks to morality, but must derive her authority from religion.

When, therefore, the obligations of morality are taught, let the sanctions of Christianity never be forgotten; by which it will be shown that they give strength and lustre to each other; religion will appear to be the voice of reason, and morality the will of God. Under this article must be recommended Tully's Offices, Grotius, Puffendorf, Cumberland's Laws of Nature, and the excellent Mr. Addison's Moral and Religious Essays.

10. Thus far the work is composed for the use of scholars, merely as they are men. But it was thought necessary to introduce something that might be particularly adapted to that country for which it is designed; and, therefore, a discourse has been added upon trade and commerce, of which it becomes every man of this nation to understand, at least, the general principles, as it is impossible that any should be high or low enough not to be, in some degree, affected by their declension or prosperity. It is, therefore, necessary that it should be universally known among us, what changes of property are advantageous, or when the balance of trade is on our side; what are the products or manufactures of other countries; and how far one nation may in any species of traffick obtain or preserve superiority over another. The theory of trade is yet but little understood, and, therefore, the practice is often without real advantage to the publick; but it might be carried on with more general success, if its principles were better considered; and to excite that attention is our chief design. To the perusal of this part of our work may succeed that of Mun upon Foreign Trade, Sir Josiah Child,

Locke upon Coin, Davenant's Treatises, the British Merchant, Dictionnaire de Commerce, and, for an abstract or compendium, Gee, and an improvement that may, hereafter, be made upon his plan.

11. The principles of laws and government come next to be considered; by which men are taught to whom obedience is due, for what it is paid, and in what degree it may be justly required. This knowledge, by peculiar necessity, constitutes a part of the education of an Englishman, who professes to obey his prince, according to the law, and who is himself a secondary legislator, as he gives his consent, by his representative, to all the laws by which he is bound, and has a right to petition the great council of the nation, whenever he thinks they are deliberating upon an act detrimental to the interest of the community. This is, therefore, a subject to which the thoughts of a young man ought to be directed; and, that he may obtain such knowledge as may qualify him to act and judge as one of a free people, let him be directed to add to this introduction Fortescue's Treatises, N. Bacon's Historical Discourse on the Laws and Government of England, Blackstone's Commentaries, Temple's Introduction, Locke on Government, Zouch's Elementa Juris Civilis, Plato Redivivus, Gurdon's History of Parliaments, and Hooker's Ecclesiastical Polity.

12. Having thus supplied the young student with knowledge, it remains now that he learn its application; and that thus qualified to act his part, he be at last taught to choose it. For this purpose a section is added upon human life and manners; in which he is cautioned against the danger of indulging his passions, of vitiating his habits, and depraving his sentiments. He is instructed in these points by three fables, two of which were of the highest authority in the ancient pagan world. But at this he is not to rest; for, if he expects to be wise and happy, he must diligently study the Scriptures of God.

Such is the book now proposed, as the first initiation into the knowledge of things, which has been thought by

many to be too long delayed in the present forms of education. Whether the complaints be not often ill-grounded, may, perhaps, be disputed; but it is at least reasonable to believe, that greater proficiency might sometimes be made; that real knowledge might be more early communicated; and that children might be allowed, without injury to health, to spend many of those hours upon useful employments, which are generally lost in idleness and play; therefore the publick will surely encourage an experiment, by which, if it fails, nobody is hurt; and, if it succeeds, all the future ages of the world may find advantage; which may eradicate or prevent vice, by turning to a better use those moments in which it is learned or indulged; and in some sense lengthen life, by teaching posterity to enjoy those years which have hitherto been lost. The success, and even the trial of this experiment, will depend upon those to whom the care of our youth is committed; and a due sense of the importance of their trust will easily prevail upon them to encourage a work which pursues the design of improving education. If any part of the following performance shall, upon trial, be found capable of amendment; if any thing can be added or altered, so as to render the attainment of knowledge more easy; the editor will be extremely obliged to any gentleman, particularly those who are engaged in the business of teaching, for such hints or observations as may tend towards the improvement, and will spare neither expense nor trouble in making the best use of their information.

PREFACE TO ROLT'S DICTIONARY[z].

No expectation is more fallacious than that which authors form of the reception which their labours will find among mankind. Scarcely any man publishes a book, whatever it be, without believing that he has caught the moment when the publick attention is vacant to his call, and the world is disposed, in a particular manner, to learn the art which he undertakes to teach.

The writers of this volume are not so far exempt from epidemical prejudices, but that they, likewise, please themselves with imagining that they have reserved their labours to a propitious conjuncture, and that this is the proper time for the publication of a dictionary of commerce.

The predictions of an author are very far from infallibility; but, in justification of some degree of confidence, it may be properly observed, that there was never, from the earliest ages, a time in which trade so much engaged the attention of mankind, or commercial gain was sought with such general emulation. Nations which have hitherto cultivated no art but that of war, nor conceived any means of increasing riches but by plunder, are awakened to more inoffensive industry. Those whom the possession of subterraneous treasures have long disposed to accommodate themselves by foreign industry, are at last convinced that idleness never will be rich. The merchant is now invited to every port; manufactures are established in all cities; and princes, who just can view the sea from some single corner of their dominions, are enlarging harbours, erecting

[z] A new Dictionary of Trade and Commerce, compiled from the information of the most eminent merchants, and from the works of the best writers on commercial subjects in all languages, by Mr. Rolt. Folio, 1757.

mercantile companies, and preparing to traffick in the remotest countries.

Nor is the form of this work less popular than the subject. It has lately been the practice of the learned to range knowledge by the alphabet, and publish dictionaries of every kind of literature. This practice has, perhaps, been carried too far by the force of fashion. Sciences, in themselves systematical and coherent, are not very properly broken into such fortuitous distributions. A dictionary of arithmetick or geometry can serve only to confound; but commerce, considered in its whole extent, seems to refuse any other method of arrangement, as it comprises innumerable particulars unconnected with each other, among which there is no reason why any should be first or last, better than is furnished by the letters that compose their names.

We cannot, indeed, boast ourselves the inventors of a scheme so commodious and comprehensive. The French, among innumerable projects for the promotion of traffick, have taken care to supply their merchants with a Dictionnaire de Commerce, collected with great industry and exactness, but too large for common use, and adapted to their own trade. This book, as well as others, has been carefully consulted, that our merchants may not be ignorant of any thing known by their enemies or rivals.

Such, indeed, is the extent of our undertaking, that it was necessary to solicit every information, to consult the living and the dead. The great qualification of him that attempts a work thus general is diligence of inquiry. No man has opportunity or ability to acquaint himself with all the subjects of a commercial dictionary, so as to describe from his own knowledge, or assert on his own experience. He must, therefore, often depend upon the veracity of others, as every man depends in common life, and have no other skill to boast than that of selecting judiciously, and arranging properly.

But to him who considers the extent of our subject, limited only by the bounds of nature and of art, the task

of selection and method will appear sufficient to overburden industry and distract attention. Many branches of commerce are subdivided into smaller and smaller parts, till, at last, they become so minute, as not easily to be noted by observation. Many interests are so woven among each other, as not to be disentangled without long inquiry; many arts are industriously kept secret, and many practices, necessary to be known, are carried on in parts too remote for intelligence.

But the knowledge of trade is of so much importance to a maritime nation, that no labour can be thought great by which information may be obtained; and, therefore, we hope the reader will not have reason to complain, that, of what he might justly expect to find, any thing is omitted.

To give a detail or analysis of our work is very difficult; a volume intended to contain whatever is requisite to be known by every trader, necessarily becomes so miscellaneous and unconnected, as not to be easily reducible to heads; yet, since we pretend in some measure to treat of traffick as a science, and to make that regular and systematical which has hitherto been, to a great degree, fortuitous and conjectural, and has often succeeded by chance rather than by conduct, it will be proper to show that a distribution of parts has been attempted, which, though rude and inadequate, will, at least, preserve some order, and enable the mind to take a methodical and successive view of this design.

In the dictionary which we here offer to the publick, we propose to exhibit the materials, the places, and the means of traffick.

The materials or subjects of traffick are whatever is bought and sold, and include, therefore, every manufacture of art, and almost every production of nature.

In giving an account of the commodities of nature, whether those which are to be used in their original state, as drugs and spices, or those which become useful when they receive a new form from human art, as flax, cotton, and metals, we shall show the places of their production,

the manner in which they grow, the art of cultivating or collecting them, their discriminations and varieties, by which the best sorts are known from the worse, and genuine from fictitious, the arts by which they are counterfeited, the casualties by which they are impaired, and the practices by which the damage is palliated or concealed. We shall, likewise, show their virtues and uses, and trace them through all the changes which they undergo.

The history of manufactures is, likewise, delivered. Of every artificial commodity the manner in which it is made is, in some measure, described, though it must be remembered, that manual operations are scarce to be conveyed by any words to him that has not seen them. Some general notions may, however, be afforded: it is easy to comprehend, that plates of iron are formed by the pressure of rollers, and bars by the strokes of a hammer; that a cannon is cast, and that an anvil is forged. But, as it is to most traders of more use to know when their goods are well wrought, than by what means, care has been taken to name the places where every manufacture has been carried furthest, and the marks by which its excellency may be ascertained.

By the places of trade, are understood all ports, cities, or towns, where staples are established, manufactures are wrought, or any commodities are bought and sold advantageously. This part of our work includes an enumeration of almost all the remarkable places in the world, with such an account of their situation, customs, and products, as the merchant would require, who, being to begin a new trade in any foreign country, was yet ignorant of the commodities of the place, and the manners of the inhabitants.

But the chief attention of the merchant, and, consequently, of the author who writes for merchants, ought to be employed upon the means of trade, which include all the knowledge and practice necessary to the skilful and successful conduct of commerce.

The first of the means of trade is proper education, which may confer a competent skill in numbers; to be

afterwards completed in the counting-house, by observation of the manner of stating accounts, and regulating books, which is one of the few arts which, having been studied in proportion to its importance, is carried as far as use can require. The counting-house of an accomplished merchant is a school of method, where the great science may be learned of ranging particulars under generals, of bringing the different parts of a transaction together, and of showing, at one view, a long series of dealing and exchange. Let no man venture into large business while he is ignorant of the method of regulating books; never let him imagine that any degree of natural abilities will enable him to supply this deficiency, or preserve multiplicity of affairs from inextricable confusion.

This is the study, without which all other studies will be of little avail; but this alone is not sufficient. It will be necessary to learn many other things, which, however, may be easily included in the preparatory institutions, such as an exact knowledge of the weights and measures of different countries, and some skill in geography and navigation, with which this book may, perhaps, sufficiently supply him.

In navigation, considered as part of the skill of a merchant, is included not so much the art of steering a ship, as the knowledge of the seacoast, and of the different parts to which his cargoes are sent; the customs to be paid; the passes, permissions, or certificates to be procured; the hazards of every voyage, and the true rate of insurance. To this must be added, an acquaintance with the policies and arts of other nations, as well those to whom the commodities are sold, as of those who carry goods of the same kind to the same market; and who are, therefore, to be watched as rivals endeavouring to take advantage of every errour, miscarriage, or debate.

The chief of the means of trade is money, of which our late refinements in traffick have made the knowledge extremely difficult. The merchant must not only inform

himself of the various denominations and value of foreign coins, together with their method of counting and reducing; such as the milleries of Portugal, and the livres of France; but he must learn what is of more difficult attainment; the discount of exchanges, the nature of current paper, the principles upon which the several banks of Europe are established, the real value of funds, the true credit of trading companies, with all the sources of profit, and possibilities of loss.

All this he must learn, merely as a private dealer, attentive only to his own advantage; but, as every man ought to consider himself as part of the community to which he belongs, and while he prosecutes his own interest to promote, likewise, that of his country, it is necessary for the trader to look abroad upon mankind, and study many questions which are, perhaps, more properly political than mercantile.

He ought, therefore, to consider very accurately the balance of trade, or the proportion between things exported and imported; to examine what kinds of commerce are unlawful, either as being expressly prohibited, because detrimental to the manufactures or other interest of his country, as the exportation of silver to the East-Indies, and the introduction of French commodities; or unlawful in itself, as the traffick for negroes. He ought to be able to state with accuracy the benefits and mischiefs of monopolies, and exclusive companies; to inquire into the arts which have been practised by them to make themselves necessary, or by their opponents to make them odious. He should inform himself what trades are declining, and what are improvable; when the advantage is on our side, and when on that of our rivals.

The state of our colonies is always to be diligently surveyed, that no advantage may be lost which they can afford, and that every opportunity may be improved of increasing their wealth and power, or of making them useful to their mother country.

There is no knowledge of more frequent use than that of duties and impost, whether customs paid at the ports, or excises levied upon the manufacturer. Much of the prosperity of a trading nation depends upon duties properly apportioned; so that what is necessary may continue cheap, and what is of use only to luxury may, in some measure, atone to the publick for the mischief done to individuals. Duties may often be so regulated as to become useful even to those that pay them; and they may be, likewise, so unequally imposed as to discourage honesty, and depress industry, and give temptation to fraud and unlawful practices.

To teach all this is the design of the Commercial Dictionary; which, though immediately and primarily written for the merchants, will be of use to every man of business or curiosity. There is no man who is not, in some degree, a merchant, who has not something to buy and something to sell, and who does not, therefore, want such instructions as may teach him the true value of possessions or commodities.

The descriptions of the productions of the earth and water, which this volume will contain, may be equally pleasing and useful to the speculatist with any other natural history; and the accounts of various manufactures will constitute no contemptible body of experimental philosophy. The descriptions of ports and cities may instruct the geographer, as well as if they were found in books appropriated only to his own science; and the doctrines of funds, insurances, currency, monopolies, exchanges, and duties, is so necessary to the politician, that without it he can be of no use either in the council or the senate, nor can speak or think justly either on war or trade.

We, therefore, hope that we shall not repent the labour of compiling this work; nor flatter ourselves unreasonably, in predicting a favourable reception to a book which no condition of life can render useless, which may contribute to the advantage of all that make or receive laws, of all that

buy or sell, of all that wish to keep or improve their possessions, of all that desire to be rich, and all that desire to be wise [a].

[a] Of this preface, Mr. Boswell informs us that Dr. Johnson said he never saw Rolt, and never read the book. "The booksellers wanted a preface to a dictionary of trade and commerce. I knew very well what such a dictionary should be, and I wrote a preface accordingly." This may be believed; but the book is a most wretched farrago of articles plundered without acknowledgment, or judgment, which, indeed, was the case with most of Rolt's compilations.

PREFACE

TO THE TRANSLATION OF

FATHER LOBO'S VOYAGE TO ABYSSINIA[b].

THE following relation is so curious and entertaining, and the dissertations that accompany it so judicious and instructive, that the translator is confident his attempt stands in need of no apology, whatever censures may fall on the performance.

The Portuguese traveller, contrary to the general vein of his countrymen, has amused his reader with no romantick absurdities or incredible fictions: whatever he relates, whether true or not, is at least probable; and he who tells nothing exceeding the bounds of probability, has a right to demand that they should believe him who cannot contradict him.

He appears, by his modest and unaffected narration, to have described things as he saw them, to have copied nature from the life, and to have consulted his senses, not his imagination. He meets with no basilisks that destroy

[b] This translation was Johnson's first literary production, and was published in 1735, with London on the title page, though, according to Boswell, it was printed at Birmingham. In the preface and dedication, the elegant structure of the sentences, and the harmony of their cadence, are such as characterize his maturer works. Here we may adopt the words of Mr. Murphy, and affirm that "we see the infant Hercules." In the merely translated parts, no vestige of the translator's own style appears. For Burke's opinion on the work, see Boswell's Life of Johnson, i.; and for Johnson's own, see Boswell, iii. In Murphy's Essay on the Life and Genius of Dr. Johnson, there is a compendious account of the benevolent travels of the Portuguese missionary, who may fairly be called the precursor of Bruce. Independent of its intrinsic merits, this translation is interesting as illustrative of Johnson's early fondness for voyages and travels; the perusal of which, refreshed Gray when weary of heavier labours, and were pronounced by Warburton to constitute an important part of a philosopher's library.—Ed.

with their eyes; his crocodiles devour their prey without tears; and his cataracts fall from the rock without deafening the neighbouring inhabitants.

The reader will here find no regions cursed with irremediable barrenness, or blest with spontaneous fecundity; no perpetual gloom or unceasing sunshine; nor are the nations here described either devoid of all sense of humanity, or consummate in all private and social virtues: here are no Hottentots without religion, polity, or articulate language; no Chinese perfectly polite, and completely skilled in all sciences: he will discover what will always be discovered by a diligent and impartial inquirer, that wherever human nature is to be found, there is a mixture of vice and virtue, a contest of passion and reason; and that the Creator doth not appear partial in his distributions, but has balanced in most countries their particular inconveniencies by particular favours.

In his account of the mission, where his veracity is most to be suspected, he neither exaggerates overmuch the merits of the Jesuits, if we consider the partial regard paid by the Portuguese to their countrymen, by the Jesuits to their society, and by the papists to their church; nor aggravates the vices of the Abyssinians; but if the reader will not be satisfied with a popish account of a popish mission, he may have recourse to the history of the church of Abyssinia, written by Dr. Geddes, in which he will find the actions and sufferings of the missionaries placed in a different light, though the same in which Mr. Le Grand, with all his zeal for the Roman church, appears to have seen them.

This learned dissertator, however valuable for his industry and erudition, is yet more to be esteemed for having dared so freely, in the midst of France, to declare his disapprobation of the patriarch Oviedo's sanguinary zeal, who was continually importuning the Portuguese to beat up their drums for missionaries who might preach the gospel with swords in their hands, and propagate, by desolation and slaughter, the true worship of the God of peace.

It is not easy to forbear reflecting with how little reason these men profess themselves the followers of JESUS, who left this great characteristick to his disciples, that they should be known by loving one another, by universal and unbounded charity and benevolence.

Let us suppose an inhabitant of some remote and superiour region, yet unskilled in the ways of men, having read and considered the precepts of the gospel, and the example of our Saviour, to come down in search of the true church. If he would not inquire after it among the cruel, the insolent, and the oppressive; among those who are continually grasping at dominion over souls as well as bodies; among those who are employed in procuring to themselves impunity for the most enormous villanies, and studying methods of destroying their fellow-creatures, not for their crimes, but their errours; if he would not expect to meet benevolence engage in massacres, or to find mercy in a court of inquisition,—he would not look for the true church in the church of Rome.

Mr. Le Grand has given, in one dissertation, an example of great moderation, in deviating from the temper of his religion; but, in the others, has left proofs, that learning and honesty are often too weak to oppose prejudice. He has made no scruple of preferring the testimony of father Du Bernat to the writings of all the Portuguese jesuits, to whom he allows great zeal, but little learning, without giving any other reason than that his favourite was a Frenchman. This is writing only to Frenchmen and to papists: a protestant would be desirous to know, why he must imagine that father Du Bernat had a cooler head or more knowledge, and why one man, whose account is singular, is not more likely to be mistaken than many agreeing in the same account.

If the Portuguese were biassed by any particular views, another bias equally powerful may have deflected the Frenchman from the truth; for they evidently write with contrary designs: the Portuguese, to make their mission seem more necessary, endeavoured to place, in the strong-

est light, the differences between the Abyssinian and Roman church; but the great Ludolfus, laying hold on the advantage, reduced these later writers to prove their conformity.

Upon the whole, the controversy seems of no great importance to those who believe the holy Scriptures sufficient to teach the way of salvation; but, of whatever moment it may be thought, there are no proofs sufficient to decide it.

His discourses on indifferent subjects will divert, as well as instruct; and if either in these, or in the relation of father Lobo, any argument shall appear unconvincing, or description obscure, they are defects incident to all mankind, which, however, are not rashly to be imputed to the authors, being sometimes, perhaps, more justly chargeable on the translator.

In this translation (if it may be so called) great liberties have been taken, which, whether justifiable or not, shall be fairly confessed, and let the judicious part of mankind pardon or condemn them.

In the first part, the greatest freedom has been used, in reducing the narration into a narrow compass; so that it is by no means a translation, but an epitome, in which, whether every thing either useful or entertaining be comprised, the compiler is least qualified to determine.

In the account of Abyssinia, and the continuation, the authors have been followed with more exactness; and as few passages appeared either insignificant or tedious, few have been either shortened or omitted.

The dissertations are the only part in which an exact translation has been attempted; and even in those, abstracts are sometimes given, instead of literal quotations, particularly in the first; and sometimes other parts have been contracted.

Several memorials and letters, which are printed at the end of the dissertations to secure the credit of the foregoing narrative, are entirely left out.

It is hoped that, after this confession, whoever shall

compare this attempt with the original, if he shall find no proofs of fraud or partiality, will candidly overlook any failure of judgment.

AN ESSAY ON EPITAPHS[c].

THOUGH criticism has been cultivated in every age of learning, by men of great abilities and extensive knowledge, till the rules of writing are become rather burdensome than instructive to the mind; though almost every species of composition has been the subject of particular treatises, and given birth to definitions, distinctions, precepts and illustrations; yet no critick of note, that has fallen within my observation, has hitherto thought sepulchral inscriptions worthy of a minute examination, or pointed out, with proper accuracy, their beauties and defects.

The reasons of this neglect it is useless to inquire, and, perhaps, impossible to discover; it might be justly expected that this kind of writing would have been the favourite topick of criticism, and that self-love might have produced some regard for it, in those authors that have crowded libraries with elaborate dissertations upon Homer; since to afford a subject for heroick poems is the privilege of very few, but every man may expect to be recorded in an epitaph, and, therefore, finds some interest in providing that his memory may not suffer by an unskilful panegyrick.

If our prejudices in favour of antiquity deserve to have any part in the regulation of our studies, epitaphs seem entitled to more than common regard, as they are, probably, of the same age with the art of writing. The most ancient structures in the world, the pyramids, are supposed to be sepulchral monuments, which either pride or

[c] From the Gentleman's Magazine.

gratitude erected; and the same passions which incited men to such laborious and expensive methods of preserving their own memory, or that of their benefactors, would, doubtless, incline them not to neglect any easier means by which the same ends might be obtained. Nature and reason have dictated to every nation, that to preserve good actions from oblivion, is both the interest and duty of mankind: and, therefore, we find no people acquainted with the use of letters, that omitted to grace the tombs of their heroes and wise men with panegyrical inscriptions.

To examine, therefore, in what the perfection of epitaphs consists, and what rules are to be observed in composing them, will be, at least, of as much use as other critical inquiries; and for assigning a few hours to such disquisitions, great examples, at least, if not strong reasons, may be pleaded.

An epitaph, as the word itself implies, is an inscription on a tomb, and, in its most extensive import, may admit, indiscriminately, satire or praise. But as malice has seldom produced monuments of defamation, and the tombs, hitherto raised, have been the work of friendship and benevolence, custom has contracted the original latitude of the word, so that it signifies, in the general acceptation, an inscription engraven on a tomb in honour of the person deceased.

As honours are paid to the dead, in order to incite others to the imitation of their excellencies, the principal intention of epitaphs is to perpetuate the examples of virtue, that the tomb of a good man may supply the want of his presence, and veneration for his memory produce the same effect as the observation of his life. Those epitaphs are, therefore, the most perfect, which set virtue in the strongest light, and are best adapted to exalt the readers ideas, and rouse his emulation.

To this end it is not always necessary to recount the actions of a hero, or enumerate the writings of a philosopher; to imagine such informations necessary, is to detract from their characters, or to suppose their works mortal, or their

achievements in danger of being forgotten. The bare name of such men answers every purpose of a long inscription.

Had only the name of Sir Isaac Newton been subjoined to the design upon his monument, instead of a long detail of his discoveries, which no philosopher can want, and which none but a philosopher can understand, those, by whose direction it was raised, had done more honour both to him and to themselves.

This, indeed, is a commendation which it requires no genius to bestow, but which can never become vulgar or contemptible, if bestowed with judgment; because no single age produces many men of merit superiour to panegyrick. None but the first names can stand unassisted against the attacks of time; and if men raised to reputation by accident or caprice, have nothing but their names engraved on their tombs, there is danger lest, in a few years, the inscription require an interpreter. Thus have their expectations been disappointed who honoured Picus of Mirandola with this pompous epitaph:

Hic situs est Picus Mirandola, cætera norunt
Et Tagus et Ganges, forsan et Antipodes.

His name, then celebrated in the remotest corners of the earth, is now almost forgotten; and his works, then studied, admired, and applauded, are now mouldering in obscurity.

Next in dignity to the bare name is a short character simple and unadorned, without exaggeration, superlatives, or rhetorick. Such were the inscriptions in use among the Romans, in which the victories gained by their emperours were commemorated by a single epithet; as Cæsar Germanicus, Cæsar Dacicus, Germanicus, Illyricus. Such would be this epitaph, Isaacus Newtonus, naturæ legibus investigatis, hic quiescit.

But to far the greatest part of mankind a longer encomium is necessary for the publication of their virtues, and the preservation of their memories; and, in the composition of these it is, that art is principally required, and precepts, therefore, may be useful.

In writing epitaphs, one circumstance is to be considered, which affects no other composition; the place in which they are now commonly found restrains them to a particular air of solemnity, and debars them from the admission of all lighter or gayer ornaments. In this, it is that, the style of an epitaph necessarily differs from that of an elegy. The customs of burying our dead, either in or near our churches, perhaps, originally founded on a rational design of fitting the mind for religious exercises, by laying before it the most affecting proofs of the uncertainty of life, makes it proper to exclude from our epitaphs all such allusions as are contrary to the doctrines, for the propagation of which the churches are erected, and to the end for which those who peruse the monuments must be supposed to come thither. Nothing is, therefore, more ridiculous than to copy the Roman inscriptions, which were engraven on stones by the highway, and composed by those who generally reflected on mortality only to excite in themselves and others a quicker relish of pleasure, and a more luxurious enjoyment of life, and whose regard for the dead extended no farther than a wish that "the earth might be light upon them."

All allusions to the heathen mythology are, therefore, absurd, and all regard for the senseless remains of a dead man impertinent and supersitious. One of the first distinctions of the primitive Christians, was their neglect of bestowing garlands on the dead, in which they are very rationally defended by their apologist in Manutius Felix. "We lavish no flowers nor odours on the dead," says he, "because they have no sense of fragrance or of beauty." We profess to reverence the dead, not for their sake, but for our own. It is, therefore, always with indignation or contempt that I read the epitaph on Cowley, a man whose learning and poetry were his lowest merits.

Aurea dum late volitant tua scripta per orbem,
Et fama eternum vivis, divine poeta,
Hic placida jaceas requie, custodiat urnam
Cana fides, vigilentque perenni lampade musæ!

Sit sacer ille locus, nec quis temerarius ausit
Sacrilega turbare manu venerabile bustum.
Intacti maneant, maneant per sæcula dulces
Cowleii cineres, serventque immobile saxum.

To pray that the ashes of a friend may lie undisturbed, and that the divinities that favoured him in his life may watch for ever round him, to preserve his tomb from violation, and drive sacrilege away, is only rational in him who believes the soul interested in the repose of the body, and the powers which he invokes for its protection able to preserve it. To censure such expressions, as contrary to religion, or as remains of heathen superstition, would be too great a degree of severity. I condemn them only as uninstructive and unaffecting, as too ludicrous for reverence or grief, for Christianity and a temple.

That the designs and decorations of monuments ought, likewise, to be formed with the same regard to the solemnity of the place, cannot be denied; it is an established principle, that all ornaments owe their beauty to their propriety. The same glitter of dress, that adds graces to gaiety and youth, would make age and dignity contemptible. Charon with his boat is far from heightening the awful grandeur of the universal judgment, though drawn by Angelo himself; nor is it easy to imagine a greater absurdity than that of gracing the walls of a Christian temple, with the figure of Mars leading a hero to battle, or Cupids sporting round a virgin. The pope who defaced the statues of the deities at the tomb of Sannazarius is, in my opinion, more easily to be defended, than he that erected them.

It is, for the same reason, improper to address the epitaph to the passenger, a custom which an injudicious veneration for antiquity introduced again at the revival of letters, and which, among many others, Passeratius suffered to mislead him in his epitaph upon the heart of Henry, king of France, who was stabbed by Clement the monk, which yet deserves to be inserted, for the sake of showing how beautiful even improprieties may become in the hands of a good writer.

Adsta, viator, et dole regum vices.
Cor regis isto conditur sub marmore,
Qui jura Gallis, jura Sarmatis dedit;
Tectus cucullo hunc sustulit sicarius.
Abi, viator, et dole regum vices.

In the monkish ages, however ignorant and unpolished, the epitaphs were drawn up with far greater propriety than can be shown in those which more enlightened times have produced.

Orate pro anima miserrimi peccatoris,

was an address, to the last degree, striking and solemn, as it flowed naturally from the religion then believed, and awakened in the reader sentiments of benevolence for the deceased, and of concern for his own happiness. There was nothing trifling or ludicrous, nothing that did not tend to the noblest end, the propagation of piety, and the increase of devotion.

It may seem very superfluous to lay it down as the first rule for writing epitaphs, that the name of the deceased is not to be omitted; nor should I have thought such a precept necessary, had not the practice of the greatest writers shown, that it has not been sufficiently regarded. In most of the poetical epitaphs, the names for whom they were composed, may be sought to no purpose, being only prefixed on the monument. To expose the absurdity of this omission, it is only necessary to ask how the epitaphs, which have outlived the stones on which they were inscribed, would have contributed to the information of posterity, had they wanted the names of those whom they celebrated.

In drawing the character of the deceased, there are no rules to be observed which do not equally relate to other compositions. The praise ought not to be general, because the mind is lost in the extent of any indefinite idea, and cannot be affected with what it cannot comprehend. When we hear only of a good or great man, we know not in what class to place him, nor have any notion of his character, distinct from that of a thousand others; his example can

have no effect upon our conduct, as we have nothing remarkable or eminent to propose to our imitation. The epitaph composed by Ennius for his own tomb, has both the faults last mentioned.

Nemo me decoret lacrumis, nec funera fletu
Faxit. Cur?—Volito vivu' per ora virum.

The reader of this epitaph receives scarce any idea from it; he neither conceives any veneration for the man to whom it belongs, nor is instructed by what methods this boasted reputation is to be obtained.

Though a sepulchral inscription is professedly a panegyrick, and, therefore, not confined to historical impartiality, yet it ought always to be written with regard to truth. No man ought to be commended for virtues which he never possessed, but whoever is curious to know his faults must inquire after them in other places; the monuments of the dead are not intended to perpetuate the memory of crimes, but to exhibit patterns of virtue. On the tomb of Mæcenas his luxury is not to be mentioned with his munificence, nor is the proscription to find a place on the monument of Augustus.

The best subject for epitaphs is private virtue; virtue exerted in the same circumstances in which the bulk of mankind are placed, and which, therefore, may admit of many imitators. He that has delivered his country from oppression, or freed the world from ignorance and errour, can excite the emulation of a very small number; but he that has repelled the temptations of poverty, and disdained to free himself from distress, at the expense of his virtue, may animate multitudes, by his example, to the same firmness of heart and steadiness of resolution.

Of this kind I cannot forbear the mention of two Greek inscriptions; one upon a man whose writings are well known, the other upon a person whose memory is preserved only in her epitaph, who both lived in slavery, the most calamitous estate in human life:

Ζωσίμη ἡ πρὶν ἔουσα μονῷ τῷ σώματι δούλη,
Καὶ τῷ σώματι νῦν εὗρεν ἐλευθερίην.

"Zosima, quæ solo fuit olim corpore serva,
Corpore nunc etiam libera facta fuit."

"Zosima, who, in her life, could only have her body enslaved, now finds her body, likewise, set at liberty."

It is impossible to read this epitaph without being animated to bear the evils of life with constancy, and to support the dignity of human nature under the most pressing afflictions, both, by the example of the heroine, whose grave we behold, and the prospect of that state in which, to use the language of the inspired writers, "The poor cease from their labours, and the weary be at rest."——

The other is upon Epictetus, the Stoick philosopher:

Δοῦλος Ἐπίκτητος γενόμην, καὶ σῶμ' ἀνάπηρος,
Καὶ πενίην Ἶρος, καὶ φίλος Ἀθανατοῖς.

"Servus Epictetus, mutilatus corpore, vixi
Pauperieque Irus, curaque prima deum."

"Epictetus, who lies here, was a slave and a cripple, poor as the beggar in the proverb, and the favourite of heaven."

In this distich is comprised the noblest panegyrick, and the most important instruction. We may learn from it, that virtue is impracticable in no condition, since Epictetus could recommend himself to the regard of heaven, amidst the temptations of poverty and slavery; slavery, which has always been found so destructive to virtue, that in many languages a slave and a thief are expressed by the same word. And we may be, likewise, admonished by it, not to lay any stress on a man's outward circumstances, in making an estimate of his real value, since Epictetus the beggar, the cripple, and the slave, was the favourite of heaven.

PREFACE TO AN ESSAY[d]

ON MILTON'S USE AND IMITATION OF THE MODERNS IN HIS PARADISE LOST.

FIRST PUBLISHED IN THE YEAR 1750.

IT is now more than half a century since the Paradise Lost, having broke through the clouds with which the unpopularity of the author, for a time, obscured it, has attracted the general admiration of mankind; who have endeavoured to compensate the errour of their first neglect, by lavish praises and boundless veneration. There seems to have arisen a contest, among men of genius and literature, who should most advance its honour, or best distinguish its beauties. Some have revised editions, others

[d] The history of Lauder's imposition is now almost forgotten, and is, certainly, not worth revival. It is fully detailed in Dr. Drake's Literary Life of Johnson, and in Boswell's Life, i. The conflicting inferences drawn from Johnson's connexion with Lauder, by Hayley, Dr. Symonds and Boswell, may easily be settled by those who have leisure for, or take interest in, such inquiries. In the very heat of the controversy, Johnson was never accused of intentional deception. Dr. Douglas, in the year 1750, published a letter to the earl of Bath, entitled, Milton vindicated from the charge of plagiarism brought against him by Mr. Lauder. In this masterly letter, after exposing the gross impositions and forgeries of Lauder, he thus adverts to the author of the preface and postscript. "It is to be hoped, nay, it is *expected*, that the elegant and nervous writer, whose judicious sentiments, and inimitable style, point out the author of Lauder's preface and postscript, will no longer allow one to plume himself with his feathers, who appears so little to have deserved his assistance; an assistance which, I am persuaded, would never have been communicated, had there been the least suspicion of those facts, which I have been the instrument of conveying to the world in these sheets." p. 77. 8vo. 1751.

In Boswell's Life, i. 209, ed. 1816, Mr. Boswell thus writes, in a note: "His lordship (Dr. Douglas, then bishop of Salisbury) has been pleased now to authorise me to say, in the strongest manner, that there is no ground whatever for any unfavourable reflection against Dr. Johnson, who expressed the strongest indignation against Lauder."—Ed.

have published commentaries, and all have endeavoured to make their particular studies, in some degree, subservient to this general emulation.

Among the inquiries, to which this ardour of criticism has naturally given occasion, none is more obscure in itself, or more worthy of rational curiosity, than a retrospection of the progress of this mighty genius, in the construction of his work; a view of the fabrick gradually rising, perhaps, from small beginnings, till its foundation rests in the centre, and its turrets sparkle in the skies; to trace back the structure, through all its varieties, to the simplicity of its first plan; to find what was first projected, whence the scheme was taken, how it was improved, by what assistance it was executed, and from what stores the materials were collected, whether its founder dug them from the quarries of nature, or demolished other buildings to embellish his own.

This inquiry has been, indeed, not wholly neglected, nor, perhaps, prosecuted with the care and diligence that it deserves. Several criticks have offered their conjectures; but none have much endeavoured to enforce or ascertain them. Mr. Voltaire[e] tells us, without proof, that the first hint of Paradise Lost was taken from a farce called Adamo, written by a player; Dr. Pearce[f], that it was derived from an Italian tragedy, called Il Paradiso Perso; and Mr. Peck[g], that it was borrowed from a wild romance. Any of these conjectures may possibly be true, but, as they stand without sufficient proof, it must be granted, likewise, that they may all possibly be false; at least, they cannot preclude any other opinion, which, without argument, has the same claim to credit, and may, perhaps, be shown, by resistless evidence, to be better founded.

[e] Essay upon the civil wars of France, and also upon the epick poetry of the European nations, from Homer down to Milton, 8vo. 1727, p. 103.

[f] Preface to a review of the text of the twelve books of Milton's Paradise Lost, in which the chief of Dr. Bentley's emendations are considered, 8vo. 1733.

[g] New memoirs of Mr. John Milton, by Francis Peck. 4to. 1740. p. 52.

It is related, by steady and uncontroverted tradition, that the Paradise Lost was at first a tragedy, and, therefore, amongst tragedies the first hint is properly to be sought. In a manuscript, published from Milton's own hand, among a great number of subjects for tragedy, is Adam unparadised, or Adam in exile; and this, therefore, may be justly supposed the embryo of this great poem. As it is observable, that all these subjects had been treated by others, the manuscript can be supposed nothing more, than a memorial or catalogue of plays, which, for some reason, the writer thought worthy of his attention. When, therefore, I had observed, that Adam in exile was named amongst them, I doubted not but, in finding the original of that tragedy, I should disclose the genuine source of Paradise Lost. Nor was my expectation disappointed; for, having procured the Adamus exul of Grotius, I found, or imagined myself to find, the first draught, the prima stamina of this wonderful poem.

Having thus traced the original of this work, I was naturally induced to continue my search to the collateral relations, which it might be supposed to have contracted, in its progress to maturity: and having, at least, persuaded my own judgment that the search has not been entirely ineffectual, I now lay the result of my labours before the publick; with full conviction that, in questions of this kind, the world cannot be mistaken, at least, cannot long continue in errour.

I cannot avoid acknowledging the candour of the author of that excellent monthly book, the Gentleman's Magazine, in giving admission to the specimens in favour of this argument; and his impartiality in as freely inserting the several answers. I shall here subjoin some extracts from the seventeenth volume of this work, which I think suitable to my purpose. To which I have added, in order to obviate every pretence for cavil, a list of the authors quoted in the following essay, with their respective dates, in comparison with the date of Paradise Lost.

POSTSCRIPT.

WHEN this Essay was almost finished, the splendid edition of Paradise Lost, so long promised by the reverend Dr. Newton, fell into my hands; of which I had, however, so little use, that, as it would be injustice to censure, it would be flattery to commend it: and I should have totally forborne the mention of a book that I have not read, had not one passage at the conclusion of the life of Milton, excited in me too much pity and indignation to be suppressed in silence.

"Deborah, Milton's youngest daughter," says the editor, "was married to Mr. Abraham Clarke, a weaver, in Spitalfields, and died in August, 1727, in the 76th year of her age. She had ten children. Elizabeth, the youngest, was married to Mr. Thomas Foster, a weaver, in Spitalfields, and had seven children, who are all dead; and she, herself, is aged about sixty, and weak and infirm. She seemeth to be a good, plain, sensible woman, and has confirmed several particulars related above, and informed me of some others, which she had often heard from her mother." These the doctor enumerates, and then adds, "In all probability, Milton's whole family will be extinct with her, and he can live only in his writings. And such is the caprice of fortune, this granddaughter of a man, who will be an everlasting glory to the nation, has now for some years, with her husband, kept a little chandler's or grocer's shop, for their subsistence, lately at the lower Holloway, in the road between Highgate and London, and, at present, in Cocklane, not far from Shoreditch-church."

That this relation is true cannot be questioned: but, surely, the honour of letters, the dignity of sacred poetry, the spirit of the English nation, and the glory of human nature, require—that it should be true no longer.—In an age, in which statues are erected to the honour of this great writer, in which his effigy has been diffused on medals, and his work propagated by translations, and illustrated by commentaries; in an age, which amidst all its

vices, and all its follies, has not become infamous for want of charity: it may be, surely, allowed to hope, that the living remains of Milton will be no longer suffered to languish in distress. It is yet in the power of a great people, to reward the poet whose name they boast, and from their alliance to whose genius, they claim some kind of superiority to every other nation of the earth; that poet, whose works may possibly be read when every other monument of British greatness shall be obliterated; to reward him—not with pictures, or with medals, which, if he sees, he sees with contempt, but—with tokens of gratitude, which he, perhaps, may even now consider as not unworthy the regard of an immortal spirit. And, surely, to those, who refuse their names to no other scheme of expense, it will not be unwelcome, that a subscription is proposed, for relieving, in the languor of age, the pains of disease, and the contempt of poverty, the granddaughter of the author of Paradise Lost. Nor can it be questioned, that if I, who have been marked out as the Zoilus of Milton, think this regard due to his posterity, the design will be warmly seconded by those, whose lives have been employed, in discovering his excellencies, and extending his reputation.

Subscriptions for the relief of Mrs. ELIZABETH FOSTER, granddaughter to JOHN MILTON, are taken in by Mr. Dodsley, in Pall-Mall; Messrs. Cox and Collings, under the Royal Exchange; Mr. Cave, at St. John's Gate, Clerkenwell; and Messrs. Payne and Bouquet, in Paternoster-Row.

A LETTER

TO THE REVEREND MR. DOUGLAS,

OCCASIONED BY HIS

VINDICATION OF MILTON.

To which are subjoined several curious original letters from the authors of the Universal History, Mr. Ainsworth, Mr. Mac-Laurin, &c.

BY WILLIAM LAUDER, A.M.

Quem pœnitet peccasse pene est innocens. SENECA.
Corpora magnanimo satis est prostrasse Leoni:
Pugna suum finem, quum jacet hostis, habet. OVID.
———*Prætuli clementiam*
Juris rigori.——— GROTII Adamus Exul.

FIRST PRINTED IN THE YEAR 1751.

PREFATORY OBSERVATIONS.

Dr. Johnson no sooner discovered the iniquitous conduct and designs of Lauder, than he compelled him to confess and recant, in the following letter to the reverend Mr. Douglas, which he drew up for him: but scarcely had Lauder exhibited this sign of contrition, when he addressed an apology to the archbishop of Canterbury, soliciting his patronage for an edition of the very poets whose works he had so misapplied, and concluding his address in the following spirit: "As for the interpolations for which I am so highly blamed, when passion is subsided, and the minds of men can patiently attend to truth, I promise amply to replace them with passages equivalent in value, that are genuine, that the public may be convinced that it was rather passion and resentment, than a penury of evidence, the twentieth part of which has not yet been produced, that obliged me to make use of them." This did not satiate his malice: in 1752, he published the first volume of the proposed edition of the Latin poets, and in 1753, a second, accompanied with notes, both Latin and English, in a style of acrimonious scurrility, indicative almost of insanity. In 1754, he brought forward a pamphlet, entitled, King Charles vindicated from the charge of plagiarism, brought against him by Milton, and Milton himself convicted of forgery and gross imposition on the public. 8vo. In this work he exhausts every epithet of abuse, and utterly disclaims every statement made in his apology. It was reviewed, probably by Johnson, in the Gent. Mag. 1754, p. 97.—ED.

TO THE REVEREND MR. DOUGLAS.

SIR,

CANDOUR and tenderness are, in any relation, and on all occasions, eminently amiable; but when they are found in an adversary, and found so prevalent as to overpower that zeal which his cause excites, and that heat which naturally increases in the prosecution of argument, and which may be, in a great measure, justified by the love of truth, they certainly appear with particular advantages; and it is impossible not to envy those who possess the friendship of him, whom it is, even, some degree of good fortune to have known as an enemy.

I will not so far dissemble my weakness, or my fault, as not to confess that my wish was to have passed undetected; but, since it has been my fortune to fail in my original design, to have the supposititious passages, which I have inserted in my quotations, made known to the world, and the shade which began to gather on the splendour of Milton totally dispersed, I cannot but count it an alleviation of my pain, that I have been defeated by a man who knows how to use advantages, with so much moderation, and can enjoy the honour of conquest, without the insolence of triumph.

It was one of the maxims of the Spartans, not to press upon a flying army, and, therefore, their enemies were always ready to quit the field, because they knew the danger was only in opposing. The civility with which you have thought proper to treat me, when you had incontestable superiority, has inclined me to make your victory complete, without any further struggle, and not only publicly to acknowledge the truth of the charge which you have hitherto advanced, but to confess, without the least dissimulation, subterfuge, or concealment, every other in-

terpolation I have made in those authors, which you have not yet had opportunity to examine.

On the sincerity and punctuality of this confession, I am willing to depend for all the future regard of mankind, and cannot but indulge some hopes, that they, whom my offence has alienated from me, may, by this instance of ingenuity and repentance, be propitiated and reconciled. Whatever be the event, I shall, at least, have done all that can be done in reparation of my former injuries to Milton, to truth, and to mankind; and entreat that those who shall continue implacable, will examine their own hearts, whether they have not committed equal crimes, without equal proofs of sorrow, or equal acts of atonement[h].

PASSAGES INTERPOLATED IN MASENIUS.

The word "pandæmonium," in the marginal notes of Book i. Essay, page 10.

Citation 6. Essay, page 38.

Annuit ipsa Dolo, malumque (heu! longa dolendi
Materies! et triste nefas!) vesana momordit,
Tanti ignara mali. Mora nulla: solutus avernus
Exspuit infandas acies; fractumque remugit,
Divulsa compage, solum: Nabathæa receptum
Regna dedere sonum, Pharioque in littore Nereus
Territus erubuit: simul aggemuere dolentes
Hesperiæ valles, Libyæque calentis arenæ
Exarsere procul. Stupefacta Lycaonis ursa
Constitit, et pavido riguit glacialis in axe:
Omnis cardinibus submotus inhorruit orbis;
"Angeli hoc efficiunt, cœlestia jussa secuti."

Citation 7. Essay, page 41.

Illa quidem fugiens, sparsis per terga capillis,
Ora rigat lacrimis, et cœlum questibus implet:
Talia voce rogans. Magni Deus arbiter orbis!
Qui rerum momenta tenes, solusque futuri

[h] The interpolations are distinguished by inverted commas.

Præscius, elapsique memor: quem terra potentem
Imperio, cœlique tremunt; quem dite superbus
Horrescit Phlegethon, pavidoque furore veretur:
En! Styge crudeli premimur. Laxantur hiatus
Tartarei, dirusque solo dominatur Avernus,
" Infernique canes populantur cuncta creata,"
Et manes violant superos: discrimina rerum
Sustulit Antitheus, divumque oppressit honorem.
Respice Sarcotheam: nimis, heu! decepta momordit
Infaustas epulas, nosque omnes prodidit hosti.

Citation 8. Essay, page 42; the whole passage.

" Quadrupedi pugnat quadrupes, volucrique volucris;
Et piscis cum pisce ferox hostilibus armis
Prælia sæva gerit: jam pristina pabula spernunt,
Jam tondere piget viridantes gramine campos:
Alterum et alterius vivunt animalia letho:
Prisca nec in gentem humanam reverentia durat;
Sed fugiunt, vel, si steterant, fera bella minantur
Fronte truci, torvosque oculos jaculantur in illam."

Citation 9. Essay, page 43.

" Vatibus antiquis numerantur lumine cassis,"
Tiresias, " Phineus," Thamyrisque, et magnus Homerus.

The above passage stands thus in Masenius, in one line:

Tiresias cæcus, Thamyrisque, et Daphnis, Homerus.

N.B. The verse now cited is in Masenius's poems, but not in the Sarcotis.

Citation 10. Essay, page 46.

In medio, turmas inter provectus ovantes
Cernitur Antitheus; reliquis hic altior unus
Eminet, et circum vulgus despectat inane:
Frons nebulis obscura latet, torvumque furorem
Dissimulat, fidæ tectus velamine noctis:
" Persimilis turri præcelsæ, aut montibus altis
Antiquæ cedro, nudatæ frondis honore."

PASSAGES INTERPOLATED IN GROTIUS.

Citation 1. Essay, page 55.

Sacri tonantis hostis, exsul patriæ
Cœlestis adsum; Tartari tristem specum
Fugiens, et atram noctis æternæ plagam.
Hac spe, quod unum maximum fugio malum,
Superos videbo. Fallor? an certe meo
Concussa tellus tota trepidat pondere?
"Quid dico? Tellus? Orcus et pedibus tremit."

Citation 2. Essay, page 58; the whole passage.

——— "Nam, me judice,
Regnare dignum est ambitu, etsi in Tartaro:
Alto præcesse Tartaro siquidem juvat,
Cœlis quam in ipsis servi obire munera."

Citation 4. Essay, page 61; the whole passage.

"Innominata quæque nominibus suis,
Libet vocare propriis vocabulis."

Citation 5. Essay, page 63.

Terrestris orbis rector! et princeps freti!
"Cœli solique sobeles; ætherium genus!"
Adame! dextram liceat amplecti tuam!

Citation 6. Essay, *ibid.*

Quod illud animal, tramite obliquo means,
Ad me volutum flexili serpit via?
Sibila retorquet ora setosum caput
Trifidamque linguam vibrat: oculi ardent duo,
"Carbunculorum luce certantes rubra."

Citation 7. Essay, page 65; the whole passage.

——"Nata deo! atque homine sata!
Regina mundi! eademque interitus inscia!
Cunctis colenda!"——

Citation 8. Essay, page 66; the whole passage.

"Rationis etenim omnino paritas exigit,

Ego bruta quando bestia evasi loquens;
Ex homine, qualis ante, te fieri deam."

Citation 9. Essay, *ibid.*

Per sancta thalami sacra, per jus nominis
Quodcumque nostri: sive me natam vocas,
Ex te creatam; sive communi patre
Ortam, sororem; sive potius conjugem:
" Cassam, oro, dulci luminis jubare tui"
Ne me relinquas: nunc tuo auxilio est opus.
Cum versa sors est. Unicum lapsæ mihi
Firmamen, unam spem gravi adflictæ malo,
Te mihi reserva, dum licet: mortalium
Ne tota soboles pereat unius nece:
" Tibi nam relicta, quo petam? aut ævum exigam?"

Citation 10. Essay, page 67; the whole passage.

" Tu namque soli numini contrarius,
Minus es nocivus; ast ego nocentior,
(Adeoque misera magis, quippe miseriæ comes
Origoque scelus est, lurida mater male!)
Deumque læsi scelere, teque, vir! simul."

Citation 11. Essay, page 68; the whole passage.

" Quod comedo, poto, gigno, diris subjacet."

INTERPOLATION IN RAMSAY.

Citation 6. Essay, page 88.

O judex! nova me facies inopinaque terret;
Me maculæ turpes, nudæque in corpore sordes,
Et cruciant duris exercita pectora pœnis:
Me ferus horror agit. Mihi non vernantia prata,
Non vitræi fontes, cœli non aurea templa,
Nec sunt grata mihi sub utroque jacentia sole:
Judicis ora dei sic terrent, lancinat ægrum
Sic pectus mihi noxa. O si mî abrumpere vitam,
Et detur pœnam quovis evadere letho!
Ipsa parens utinam mihi tellus ima dehiscat!
Ad piceas trudarque umbras, atque infera regna!
" Pallentes umbras Erebi, noctemque profundam!"

Montibus aut premar injectis, cœlique ruina!
Ante tuos vultus, tua quam flammantiaque ora
Suspiciam, caput objectem et cœlestibus armis!

INTERPOLATIONS IN STAPHORSTIUS.

Citation 3. Essay, page 104.

Fœdus in humanis fragili quod sanctius ævo!
Firmius et melius, quod magnificentius, ac quam
Conjugii, sponsi sponsæque jugalia sacra!
" Auspice te, fugiens alieni subcuba lecti,
Dira libido hominum tota de gente repulsa est:
Ac tantum gregibus pecudum ratione carentum
Imperat, et sine lege tori furibunda vagatur.
Auspice te, quam jura probant, rectumque, piumque,
Filius atque pater, fraterque innotuit: et quot
Vincula vicini sociarunt sanguinis, a te
Nominibus didicere suam distinguere gentem."

Citation 6. Essay, page 109.

Cœlestes animæ! sublimia templa tenentes,
Laudibus adcumulate deum super omnia magnum!—
Tu quoque nunc animi vis tota ac maxuma nostri!
Tota tui in Domini grates dissolvere laudes!
" Aurora redeunte nova, redeuntibus umbris."
Immensum! augustum! verum! inscrutabile numen!
Summe Deus! sobolesque Dei! concorsque duorum,
Spiritus! æternas retines, bone rector! habenas,
Per mare, per terras, cœlosque, atque unus Jehova
Existens, celebrabo tuas, memorique sonabo
Organico plectro laudes. Te pectore amabo,
" Te primum, et medium, et summum, sed fine carentem,"
O miris mirande modis! ter maxime rerum!
Collustrat terras dum lumine Titan Eoo!

INTERPOLATION IN FOX.

Essay, page 116.

——— Tu Psychephone
Hypocrisis esto, hoc sub Francisci pallio.
Tu Thanate, Martyromastix re et nomine sies.

Altered thus,

——— Tu Pyschephone!
Hypocrisis esto; hoc sub Francisci pallio,
" Quo tuto tecti sese credunt emori."

INTERPOLATION IN QUINTIANUS.

Essay, page 117.

Mic. Cur huc procaci veneris cursu refer?
Manere si quis in sua potest domo,
Habitare numquam curet alienas domos.
Luc. Quis non, relicta Tartari nigri domo,
Veniret? Illic summa tenebrarum lues,
Ubi pedor ingens redolet extremum situm.
Hic autem amœna regna, et dulcis quies;
Ubi serenus ridet æternum dies.
Mutare facile[1] est pondus immensum levi;
" Summos dolores maximisque gaudiis."

INTERPOLATION IN BEZA.

Essay, page 119.

Stygemque testor, et profunda Tartari,
Nisi impediret livor, et queis prosequor
Odia supremum numen, atque hominum genus,
Pietate motus hinc patris, et hinc filii,
Possem parenti condolere et filio,
" Quasi exuissem omnem malitiam ex pectore."

INTERPOLATION IN FLETCHER.

Essay, page 124.

Nec tamen æternos obliti (absiste timere)
Umquam animos, fessique ingentes ponimus iras.
Nec fas; non sic deficimus, nec talia tecum
Gessimus, in cœlos olim tua signa secuti.
Est hic, est vitæ et magni contemptor Olympi,
Quique oblatam animus lucis nunc respuat aulam,
Et domiti tantum placeat cui regia cœli.
Ne dubita, numquam fractis hæc pectora, numquam
Deficient animis: prius ille ingentia cœli

[1] For *facile*, the word *volupe* was substituted in the Essay.

Atria, desertosque æternæ lucis alumnos
Destituens, Erebum admigret noctemque profundam,
Et Stygiis mutet radiantia lumina flammis.
" In promptu caussa est: superest invicta voluntas,
Immortale odium, vindictæ et sæva cupido."

INTERPOLATIONS IN TAUBMAN.

Essay, page 132.

Tune, ait, imperio regere omnia solus; et una
Filius iste tuus, qui se tibi subjicit ultro,
Ac genibus minor ad terram prosternit, et offert
Nescio quos toties animi servilis honores?
Et tamen æterni proles æterna Jehovæ
Audit ab ætherea luteaque propagine mundi.
(" Scilicet hunc natum dixisti cuncta regentem;
Cælitibus regem cunctis, dominumque supremum")
Huic ego sim supplex? ego? quo præstantior alter
Non agit in superis. Mihi jus dabit ille, suum qui
Dat caput alterius sub jus et vincula legum?
Semideus reget iste polos? reget avia terræ?
Me pressum leviore manu fortuna tenebit?
" Et cogar æternum duplici servire tyranno?"
Haud ita. Tu solus non polles fortibus ausis.
Non ego sic cecidi, nec sic mea fata premuntur,
Ut nequeam relevare caput, colloque superbum
Excutere imperium. Mihi si mea dextra favebit,
Audeo totius mihi jus promittere mundi.

Essay, page 152.

" Throni, dominationes, principatus, virtutes, potestates," is said to be a line borrowed by Milton from the title-page of Heywood's Hierarchy of Angels. But there are more words in Heywood's title; and, according to his own arrangement of his subjects, they should be read thus:—" Seraphim, cherubim, throni, potestates, angeli, archangeli, principatus, dominationes."

These are my interpolations, minutely traced without any arts of evasion. Whether from the passages that yet remain, any reader will be convinced of my general assertion, and allow, that Milton had recourse for assistance to

any of the authors whose names I have mentioned, I shall not now be very diligent to inquire, for I had no particular pleasure in subverting the reputation of Milton, which I had myself once endeavoured to exalt[k]; and of which, the foundation had always remained untouched by me, had not my credit and my interest been blasted, or thought to be blasted, by the shade which it cast from its boundless elevation.

About ten years ago, I published an edition of Dr. Johnston's translation of the Psalms, and having procured from the general assembly of the church of Scotland, a recommendation of its use to the lower classes of grammar schools, into which I had begun to introduce it, though not without much controversy and opposition, I thought it likely that I should, by annual publications, improve my little fortune, and be enabled to support myself in freedom from the miseries of indigence. But Mr. Pope, in his malevolence to Mr. Benson, who had distinguished himself by his fondness for the same version, destroyed all my hopes by a distich, in which he places Johnston in a contemptuous comparison with the author of Paradise Lost[l].

From this time, all my praises of Johnston became ridi-

[k] Virorum maximus—Joannes Miltonus—Poeta celeberrimus—non Angliæ modo, soli natalis, verum generis humani ornamentum—cujus eximius liber, Anglicanis versibus conscriptus, vulgo Paradisus amissus, immortalis illud ingenii monumentum, cum ipsa fere æternitate perennaturum est opus!—Hujus memoriam Anglorum primus, post tantum, proh dolor! ab tanti excessu poetæ intervallum, statua eleganti in loco celeberrimo, cœnobio Westmonasteriensi, posita, regum, principum, antistitum, illustriumque Angliæ virorum cæmeterio, vir ornatissimus, Gulielmus Benson prosecutus est.

Poetarum Scotorum Musæ Sacræ, in præfatione, Edinb. 1739.

A character, as high and honourable as ever was bestowed upon him by the most sanguine of his admirers! and as this was my cool and sincere opinion of that wonderful man formerly, so I declare it to be the same still, and ever will be, notwithstanding all appearances to the contrary, occasioned merely by passion and resentment; which appear, however, by the Postscript to the Essay, to be so far from extending to the posterity of Milton, that I recommend his only remaining descendant, in the warmest terms, to the public.

[l] On two unequal crutches propp'd he† came;
Milton's on this, on that *one* Johnston's name. Dunciad, Book IV.

† *Benson.*] This man endeavoured to raise himself to fame, by erecting monuments, striking coins, and procuring translations of Milton; and afterwards

culous, and I was censured, with great freedom, for forcing upon the schools an author whom Mr. Pope had mentioned only as a foil to a better poet. On this occasion, it was natural not to be pleased, and my resentment seeking to discharge itself somewhere, was unhappily directed against Milton. I resolved to attack his fame, and found some passages in cursory reading, which gave me hopes of stigmatizing him as a plagiary. The farther I carried my search, the more eager I grew for the discovery; and the more my hypothesis was opposed, the more I was heated with rage. The consequence of my blind passion, I need not relate; it has, by your detection, become apparent to mankind. Nor do I mention this provocation, as adequate to the fury which I have shown, but as a cause of anger, less shameful and reproachful than fractious malice, personal envy, or national jealousy.

But for the violation of truth, I offer no excuse, because I well know, that nothing can excuse it. Nor will I aggravate my crime, by disingenuous palliations. I confess it, I repent it, and resolve, that my first offence shall be my last. More I cannot perform, and more, therefore, cannot be required. I entreat the pardon of all men, whom I have by any means induced to support, to countenance, or patronise my frauds, of which, I think myself obliged to declare, that not one of my friends was conscious. I hope to deserve, by better conduct, and more useful undertakings, that patronage which I have obtained from the most illustrious and venerable names by misrepresentation and delusion, and to appear hereafter in such

by a great passion for Arthur Johnston, a Scots physician's version of the Psalms, of which he printed many fine editions. *Notes on the Dunciad.*

No fewer than six different editions of that useful and valuable book, two in quarto, two in octavo, and two in a lesser form, now lie, like lumber, in the hand of Mr. Vaillant, bookseller, the effects of Mr. Pope's ill-natured criticism.

One of these editions in quarto, illustrated with an interpretation and notes, after the manner of the classic authors *in usum Delphini*, was, by the worthy editor, anno 1741, inscribed to his Royal Highness Prince George, as a proper book for his instruction in principles of piety, as well as knowledge of the Latin tongue, when he should arrive at due maturity of age. To restore this book to credit was the cause that induced me to engage in this disagreeable controversy, rather than any design to depreciate the just reputation of Milton.

a character, as shall give you no reason to regret that your name is frequently mentioned with that of,

Reverend Sir,

Your most humble servant,

WILLIAM LAUDER.

December 20, 1750.

TESTIMONIES CONCERNING MR. LAUDER.

Edinb. May 22, 1734.

THESE are certifying, that Mr. William Lauder past his course at this university, to the general satisfaction of these masters, under whom he studied. That he has applied himself particularly to the study of humanity[m] ever since. That for several years past, he has taught with success, students in the humanity class, who were recommended to him by the professor thereof. And lastly, has taught that class itself, during the indisposition, and since the death of its late professor: and, therefore, is, in our opinion, a fit person to teach humanity in any school or college whatever.

J. GOWDIE, S.S.T.P.
MATT. CRAUFURD, S.S.T. et HIST. EC. PR. REG.
WILLIAM SCOTT, P.P.
ROBERT STUART, PH. NAT. PR.
COL. DRUMMOND, L.G. et P. PR.
COL. MAC-LAURIN, MATH. P. EDIN.
AL. BAYNE, J.P.
CHARLES MACKY, HIST. P.
ALEX. MORRO, ANAT. P.
WILLIAM DAWSON, L.H.P.

[m] So the Latin tongue is called in Scotland, from the Latin phrase, *classis humaniorum literarum*, the class or form where that language is taught.

A Letter from the Reverend Mr. Patrick Cuming, one of the Ministers of Edinburgh, and Regius Professor of Church History in the University there, to the Reverend Mr. Blair, Rector of the Grammar school at Dundee.

D. B.

UPON a public advertisement in the newspapers, of the vacancy of a master's place in your school, Mr. William Lauder, a friend of mine, proposes to set up for a candidate, and goes over for that purpose. He has long taught the Latin with great approbation in this place, and given such proofs of his mastery in that language, that the best judges do, upon all occasions, recommend him as one who is qualified in the best manner. He has taught young boys and young gentlemen, with great success; nor did I ever hear of any complaint of him from either parents or children. I beg leave to recommend him to you as my friend; what friendship you show him, I will look upon as a very great act of friendship to me, of which he and I will retain the most grateful sense, if he is so happy as to be preferred. I persuade myself, you will find him ready at all times to be advised by you, as I have found him. *Indeed if justice had been done him, he should long ago have been advanced for his merit.* I ever am,

D. B.

Your most affectionate, humble servant,

PATRICK CUMING.

Edin. Nov. 13, 1742.

A Letter from Mr. Mac-Laurin, late Professor of Mathematicks in the University of Edinburgh, to the Reverend Mr. George Blair, Rector of the Grammar school at Dundee.

SIR,

THOUGH unacquainted, I take the liberty of giving you this trouble, from the desire I have always had to see

Mr. Lauder provided in a manner suited to his talent. I know him to have made uncommon progress in classical learning, to have taught it with success, and never heard there could be any complaint against his method of teaching. I am, indeed, a stranger to the reasons of his want of success on former occasions. But after conversing with him, I have ground to hope, that he will be always advised by you, for whom he professes great esteem, and will be useful under you. I am,

Sir,

Your most obedient, humble servant,

COLIN MAC-LAURIN.

College of Edinburgh, Nov. 30, 1742.

A Letter from the Authors of the Universal History, to Mr. Lauder.

London, August 12th, 1741.

LEARNED SIR,

WHEN we so gladly took the first opportunity of reviving the memory and merit of your incomparable Johnston, in the first volume of our Universal History, our chief aim was to excite some generous Mecenas to favour the world with a new edition of a poem which we had long since beheld with no small concern, buried, as it were, by some unaccountable fatality, into an almost total oblivion; whilst others of that kind, none of them superior, many vastly inferior to it, rode, unjustly, as we thought, triumphant over his silent grave. And it is with great satisfaction that we have seen our endeavours so happily crowned in the edition you soon after gave of it at Edinburgh, in your learned and judicious vindication of your excellent author, and more particularly by the just deference which your learned and pious convocation has been pleased to pay to that admirable version.

We have had since then, the pleasure to see your worthy example followed here, in the several beautiful

editions of the honourable Mr. Auditor Benson, with his critical notes upon the work.

It was, indeed, the farthest from our thoughts, to enter into the merit of the controversy between your two great poets, Johnston and Buchanan; neither were we so partial to either as not to see, that each had their shades as well as lights; so that, if the latter has been more happy in the choice and variety of his metre, it is as plain, that he has given his poetic genius such an unlimited scope, as has in many cases quite disfigured the peculiar and inimitable beauty, simplicity, and energy of the original, which the former, by a more close and judicious version, has constantly, and surprisingly displayed. Something like this we ventured to hint in our note upon these two noble versions; to have said more, would have been inconsistent with our designed brevity.

We have, likewise, since seen what your opponent has writ in praise of the one, and derogation of the other, and think you have sufficiently confuted him, and with respect to us, he has been so far from giving us any cause to retract what we had formerly said, that it has administered an occasion to us of vindicating it, as we have lately done by some critical notes on your excellent Johnston, which we communicated soon after to Mr. *A. B.* who was pleased to give them a place in his last edition of him, and which we doubt not you have seen long ago. How they have been relished among you we know not, but with us they have been thought sufficient to prove what we have advanced, as well as to direct the attentive reader to discover new instances of your author's exactness and elegance, in every page, if not almost in every line.

We gratefully accept of the books, and kind compliments you were pleased to transmit to us by Mr. Strahan, and had long since returned you our thanks, but for the many avocations which the great work you know us to be engaged in doth of necessity bring upon us; obliging us, or some, at least, of our society, to make, from time to time, an excursion to one or other of our two learned uni-

versities, and consulting them upon the best method of carrying on this work to the greatest advantage to the public. This has been some considerable part of our employment for these twelve months past; and we flatter ourselves, that we have, with their assistance and approbation, made such considerable improvements on our original plan, as will scarcely fail of being acceptable to the learned world. They will shortly appear in print, to convince the world that we have not been idle, though this sixth volume is like to appear somewhat later in the year than was usual with our former ones. We shall take the liberty to transmit some copies of our new plan to you as soon as they are printed. All we have left to wish with respect to your excellent countryman and his version is, that it may always meet with such powerful and impartial advocates, and that it may be as much esteemed by all candid judges, as it is by,

Learned Sir,
Your sincere wellwishers and humble servants,
The AUTHORS of the Universal History.

A Letter from the learned Mr. Robert Ainsworth, author of the Latin and English Dictionary, to Mr. Lauder.

LEARNED AND WORTHY SIR,

THESE wait on you, to thank you for the honour you have done a person, equally unknown as undeserving, in your valuable present, which I did not receive till several weeks after it was sent: and since I received it, my eyes have been so bad, and my hand so unstable, that I have been forced to defer my duty, as desirous to thank you with my own hand. I congratulate to your nation the just honour ascribed to it by its neighbours and more distant countries, in having bred two such excellent poets as your Buchanan and Johnston, whom to name is to com-

mend; but am concerned for their honour at home, who being committed together, seem to me both to suffer a diminution, whilst justice is done to neither. But at the same time I highly approve your nation's piety in bringing into your schools sacred instead of profane poesy, and heartily wish that ours, and all Christian governments, would follow your example herein. If a mixture of *utile dulci* be the best composition in poetry, (which is too evident to need the judgment of the nicest critick in the art,) surely the *utile* so transcendently excels in the sacred hymns, that a Christian must deny his name that doth not acknowledge it: and if the *dulce* seem not equally to excel, it must be from a vitiated taste of those who read them in the original, and, in others, at second-hand, from translations. For the manner of writing in the east and west is widely distant, and which to a paraphrast must render his task exceeding difficult, as requiring a perfect knowledge in two languages, wherein the idioms and graces of speech, caused by the diversity of their religion, laws, customs, &c. are as remote as the inhabitants, wherein, notwithstanding, your poets have succeeded to admiration.

Your main contest seems to me, when stript of persons, whether the easy or sublime in poesy be preferable; if so,

> Non opis est nostræ tantam componere litem:

nor think I it in your case material to be decided. Both these have their particular excellencies and graces, and youth ought to be taught wherein (which the matter ought chiefly to determine) the one hath place, and where the other. Now since the hymns of David, Moses, and other divine poets, intermixt with them, (infinitely excelling those of Callimachus, Alcæus, Sappho, Anacreon, and all others,) abound in both these virtues, and both your poets are acknowledged to be very happy in paraphrasing them, it is my opinion, both of them, without giving the least preference to either, should be read alternately in your schools,

as the tutor shall direct. Pardon, learned Sir, this scribble to my age and weakness, both which are very great, and command me wherein I may serve you, as,

Learned Sir,

Your obliged, thankful, and obedient servant,

ROBERT AINSWORTH.

Spitalfields, Sept. 1741.

A Letter from the Authors of the Universal History to Mr. Auditor Benson.

SIR,

IT is with no small pleasure that we see Dr. Johnston's translation of the Psalms revived in so elegant a manner, and adorned with such a just and learned display of its inimitable beauties. As we flatter ourselves that the character we gave it, in our first volume of the Universal History, did, in some measure, contribute to it, we hope, that in justice to that great poet, you will permit us to cast the following mites into your treasury of critical notes on his noble version. We always thought the palm by far this author's due, as upon many other accounts, so especially for two excellencies hitherto not taken notice of by any critic, that we know of, and which we beg leave to transmit to you, and if you think fit, by you to the public, in the following observations.

We beg leave to subscribe ourselves,

Sir, &c.

The AUTHORS of the Universal History.

Dr. Isaac Watts, D. D. in his late book, entitled, The Improvement of the Mind, Lond. 1741, p. 114.

UPON the whole survey of things, it is my opinion, that for almost all boys who learn this tongue, [the Latin,] it would be much safer to be taught Latin poesy, as soon, and as far as they can need it, from those excellent trans-

lations of David's Psalms, which are given us by Buchanan in the various measures of Horace; and the lower classes had better read Dr. Johnston's translation of those Psalms, another elegant writer of the Scots nation, instead of Ovid's Epistles; for he has turned the same Psalms, perhaps, with greater elegancy, into elegiac verse, whereof the learned W. Benson, esq. has lately published a new edition; and I hear that these Psalms are honoured with an increasing use in the schools of Holland and Scotland. A stanza, or a couplet of those writers would now and then stick upon the minds of youth, and would furnish them infinitely better with pious and moral thoughts, and do something towards making them good men and Christians.

An Act of the Commission of the General Assembly of the Kirk of Scotland, recommending Dr. Arthur Johnston's Latin Paraphrase of the Psalms of David, &c.

At Edinburgh, 13th of November, 1740, post meridiem.

A Petition having been presented to the late General Assembly, by Mr. William Lauder, teacher of humanity in Edinburgh, craving, That Dr. Arthur Johnston's Latin Paraphrase on the Psalms of David, and Mr. Robert Boyd, of Trochrig, his Hecatombe Christiana, may be recommended to be taught in all grammar schools; and the assembly having appointed a committee of their number to take the desire of the foresaid petition into their consideration, and report to the commission: the said committee offered their opinion, that the commission should grant the desire of the said petition, and recommend the said Dr. Johnston's Paraphrase to be taught in the lower classes of the schools, and Mr. George Buchanan's Paraphrase on the Psalms, together with Mr. Robert Boyd of Trochrig's, Hecatombe Christiana in the higher classes of schools, and humanity-classes in universities. The com-

mission having heard the said report, unanimously approved thereof, and did, and hereby do, recommend accordingly.

Extracted by

WILLIAM GRANT[n], Cl. Ecl. Sc.

A Letter from the learned Mr. Abraham Gronovius, Secretary to the University of Leyden, to Mr. Lauder, concerning the Adamus Exsul of Grotius.

Clarissimo Viro, Wilhelmo Laudero, Abrahamus Gronovius, S. P. D.

POSTQUAM binæ literæ tuæ ad me perlatæ fuerunt, duas editiones carminum H. Grotii, viri vere summi, excussi; verum ab utraque tragœdiam, quam Adamum Exsulem inscripsit 'O ΠΑΝΥ, abesse deprehendi; neque ullum ejusdem exemplar, quamvis tres[o] editiones exstare adnotaveram, ullibi offendere potui, adeo ut spe, quam vorabam desiderio tuo satisfaciendi, me prorsus excidisse existimarem.

Verum nuperrime forte contigit, ut primam tragœdiæ Grotianæ editionem, Hagæ, an. 1601. publicatam, beneficio amicissimi mihi viri nactus fuerim, ejusque decem priores paginas, quibus, præter chorum, actus primus comprehenditur, a Jacobo meo, optimæ spei adolescente, transcriptas nunc ad te mitto. Vale, vir doctissime, meque, ut facis, amare perge. Dabam Lugd. Bat. A. D. IV. Id. Sept. A. D. MDCCXLVI.

[n] This honourable gentleman is now his Majesty's Advocate for Scotland.

[o] Though Gronovius here mentions only three editions of this noble and curious performance, the Adamus Exsul of Grotius; yet it appears from the catalogue of his works, that no fewer than four have been printed, two in quarto, and two in octavo, in the years 1601, 1608, and 1635; two having been made, one in quarto, the other in octavo, anno 1601.

A second Letter from the same gentleman to Mr. Lauder, on the same subject.

Clarissime atque eruditissime vir,

POSTEAQUAM, tandem Jacobus meus residuam partem, quam desiderabas, tragœdiæ Grotianæ transcripserat, ut ea diutius careres, committere nolui: quod autem citius illam ad finem perducere non potuerit, obstiterunt variæ occupationes, quibus districtus fuit. Nam, præter scholastica studia, quibus strenue incubuit, ipsi componenda erat oratio, qua rudimenta linguæ Græcæ Latinæque deponeret, eamque, quod vehementer lætor, venuste, et quidem stilo ligato, composuit, et in magna auditorum corona pronuntiavit. Quod autem ad exemplar ipsum, quo Adamus Exsul comprehenditur, spectat, id lubens, si meum foret, ad te perferri curarem, verum illud a clarissimo possessore tanti æstimatur, ut persuasum habeam me istud minime ab ipso impetraturum: et sane sacra carmina Grotii adeo raro obvia sunt, ut eorundem exemplar apud ipsos remonstrantium ecclesiastas frustra quæsiverim.

Opus ipsum inscriptum est HENRICO BORBONIO, PRINCIPI CONDÆO; et forma libri est in quarto, ut nullo pacto literis includi possit. Ceterum, pro splendidissima et Magnæ Britanniæ principe, cui merito dicata est, digna editione Psalmorum, ex versione metrica omnium fere poetarum principis JONSTONI maximas tibi grates habet agitque Jacobus. Utinam illustrissimus Bensonus in usum serenissimi principis, atque ingeniorum in altiora surgentium, eadem forma, iisdemque typis exarari juberet divinos illos Ciceronis de Officiis libros, dignos sane, quos diurna nocturnaque manu versaret princeps, a quo aliquando Britannici regni majestas et populi salus pendebunt! Interim tibi, eruditissime vir, atque etiam politissimo D. Caveo, pro muneribus literariis, quæ per nobilissimum Lawsonium[p] ad me curastis, magno opere me obstrictum

[p] The person here meant was the learned and worthy Dr. Isaac Lawson, late physician to the English army in Flanders; by whom Mr. Gronovius did me the honour to transmit to me two or three acts of the Adamus Exsul of

agnosco, eademque, summa cum voluptate, a me perlecta sunt.

Filius meus te plurimum salutat.

Vale, doctissime vir, meisque verbis D. Caveum saluta, atque amare perge,

Tuum,
ABRAHAMUM GRONOVIUM.

Dabam Leidis, A. D. xiv. KAL.
Maias, A. D. MDCCXLVII.

POSTSCRIPT.

AND now my character is placed above all suspicion of fraud by authentick documents, I will make bold, at last, to pull off the mask, and declare sincerely the true motive that induced me to interpolate a few lines into some of the authors quoted by me in my Essay on Milton, which was this: Knowing the prepossession in favour of Milton, how deeply it was rooted in many, I was willing to make trial, if the partial admirers of that author would admit a translation of his own words to pass for his sense, or exhibit his meaning; which I thought they would not: nor was I mistaken in my conjecture, forasmuch as several gentlemen, seemingly persons of judgment and learning, assured me, they humbly conceived I had not proved my point, and that Milton might have written as he has done, supposing he had never seen these authors, or they had never existed. Such is the force of prejudice! This exactly confirms the judicious observation of the excellent moralist and poet:

> Pravo favore labi mortales solent;
> Et pro judicio dum stant erroris sui,
> Ad pœnitendum rebus manifestis agi.

For, had I designed, as the vindicator of Milton supposes,

Grotius, transcribed by his son, Mr. James. The truth of this particular consists perfectly well with the knowledge of the Doctor's brother, John Lawson, esq. counsellor at law; who also had the same thing lately confirmed to him by Mr. Gronovius himself in Holland.

to impose a trick on the publick, and procure credit to my assertions by an imposture, I would never have drawn lines from Hog's translation of Milton, a book common at every sale, I had almost said, at every stall, nor ascribed them to authors so easily attained: I would have gone another way to work, by translating forty or fifty lines, and assigning them to an author, whose works possibly might not be found till the world expire at the general conflagration. My imposing, therefore, on the publick in general, instead of a few obstinate persons, for whose sake alone the stratagem was designed, is the only thing culpable in my conduct, for which again I most humbly ask pardon: and that this, and this only, was, as no other could be, my design, no one, I think, can doubt, from the account I have just now given; and whether that was so criminal, as it has been represented, I shall leave every impartial mind to determine.

AN ACCOUNT OF AN ATTEMPT TO ASCERTAIN THE LONGITUDE[q].

FIRST PRINTED IN THE YEAR 1755.

IT is well known to seamen and philosophers, that, after the numerous improvements produced by the extensive commerce of the later ages, the great defect in the art of sailing is ignorance of longitude, or of the distance to which the ship has passed eastward or westward, from any given meridian.

That navigation might be at length set free from this uncertainty, the legislative power of this kingdom incited the industry of searchers into nature, by a large reward proposed to him who should show a practicable method of finding the longitude at sea; and proportionable recompenses to those, who, though they should not fully attain this great end, might yet make such advances and discoveries as should facilitate the work to those that might succeed them.

By the splendour of this golden encouragement many eyes were dazzled, which nature never intended to pry into her secrets. By the hope of sudden riches many understandings were set on work very little proportioned to their strength, among whom whether mine shall be numbered, must be left to the candour of posterity: for I, among others, laid aside the business of my profession, to apply myself to the study of the longitude, not, indeed, in expectation of the reward due to a complete discovery; yet, not without hopes that I might be considered as an

[q] An account of an attempt to ascertain the longitude at sea, by an exact theory of the variation of the magnetical needle; with a table of variations at the most remarkable cities in Europe, from the year 1660 to 1860. By Zachariah Williams.

assistant to some greater genius, and receive from the justice of my country the wages offered to an honest and not unsuccessful labourer in science.

Considering the various means by which this important inquiry has been pursued, I found that the observation of the eclipses, either of the primary or secondary planets, being possible but at certain times, could be of no use to the sailor; that the motions of the moon had been long attended, however accurately, without any consequence; that other astronomical observations were difficult and uncertain, with every advantage of situation, instruments, and knowledge; and were, therefore, utterly impracticable to the sailor, tost upon the water, ill provided with instruments, and not very skilful in their application.

The hope of an accurate clock or time-keeper is more specious. But when I began these studies, no movements had yet been made that were not evidently unaccurate and uncertain: and even of the mechanical labours which I now hear so loudly celebrated, when I consider the obstruction of movements by friction, the waste of their parts by attrition, the various pressure of the atmosphere, the effects of different effluvia upon metals, the power of heat and cold upon all matter, the changes of gravitation and the hazard of concussion, I cannot but fear that they will supply the world with another instance of fruitless ingenuity, though, I hope, they will not leave upon this country the reproach of unrewarded diligence.

I saw, therefore, nothing on which I could fix with probability of success, but the magnetical needle, an instrument easily portable, and little subject to accidental injuries, with which the sailor has had a long acquaintance, which he will willingly study, and can easily consult.

The magnetick needle, from the year 1300, when it is generally supposed to have been first applied by Flavio Gioia, of Amalfi, to the seaman's use, seems to have been long thought to point exactly to the north and south by the navigators of these times; who sailing commonly on the calm Mediterranean, or making only short voyages,

had no need of very accurate observations; and who, if they ever transiently observed any deviations from the meridian, either ascribed them to some extrinsick and accidental cause, or willingly neglected what it was not necessary to understand.

But when the discovery of the new world turned the attention of mankind upon the naval sciences, and long courses required greater niceties of practice, the variation of the needle soon became observable, and was recorded, in 1500, by Sebastian Cabot, a Portuguese, who, at the expense of the king of England, discovered the northern coasts of America.

As the next century was a time of naval adventures, it might be expected that the variation once observed, should have been well studied: yet it seems to have been little heeded; for it was supposed to be constant, and always the same in the same place, till, in 1625, Gellibrand noted its changes, and published his observations.

From this time the philosophical world had a new subject of speculation, and the students of magnetism employed their researches upon the gradual changes of the needle's direction, or the variations of the variation, which have hitherto appeared so desultory and capricious, as to elude all the schemes which the most fanciful of the philosophical dreamers could devise for its explication. Any system that could have united these tormenting diversities, they seem inclined to have received, and would have contentedly numbered the revolutions of a central magnet, with very little concern about its existence, could they have assigned it any motion, or vicissitude of motions, which would have corresponded with the changes of the needle.

Yet upon this secret property of magnetism I ventured to build my hopes of ascertaining the longitude at sea. I found it undeniably certain that the needle varies its direction in a course eastward or westward between any assignable parallels of latitude: and, supposing nature to be in this, as in all other operations, uniform and consistent, I doubted not but the variation proceeded in some esta-

blished method, though, perhaps, too abstruse and complicated for human comprehension.

This difficulty, however, was to be encountered; and by close and steady perseverance of attention I at last subdued, or thought myself to have subdued it: having formed a regular system in which all the phænomena seemed to be reconciled; and, being able, from the variation in places where it is known, to trace it to those where it is unknown; or from the past to predict the future; and, consequently, knowing the latitude and variation, to assign the true longitude of any place.

With this system I came to London, where, having laid my proposals before a number of ingenious gentlemen, it was agreed that during the time required to the completion of my experiments, I should be supported by a joint subscription to be repaid out of the reward, to which they concluded me entitled. Among the subscribers, was Mr. Rowley, the memorable constructor of the orrery; and among my favourers was the lord Piesley, a title not unknown among magnetical philosophers. I frequently showed, upon a globe of brass, experiments by which my system was confirmed, at the house of Mr. Rowley, where the learned and curious of that time generally assembled.

At this time great expectations were raised by Mr. Whiston, of ascertaining the longitude by the inclination of the needle, which he supposed to increase or diminish regularly. With this learned man I had many conferences, in which I endeavoured to evince what he has at last confessed in the narrative of his life, the uncertainty and inefficacy of his method.

About the year 1729, my subscribers explained my pretensions to the lords of the Admiralty, and the lord Torrington declared my claim just to the reward assigned, in the last clause of the act, to those who should make discoveries conducive to the perfection of the art of sailing. This he pressed with so much warmth, that the commissioners agreed to lay my tables before Sir Isaac Newton, who excused himself, by reason of his age, from a regular

examination: but when he was informed that I held the variation at London to be still increasing; which he and the other philosophers, his pupils, thought to be then stationary, and on the point of regression, he declared that he believed my system visionary. I did not much murmur to be for a time overborne by that mighty name, even when I believed that the name only was against me: and I have lived till I am able to produce, in my favour, the testimony of time, the inflexible enemy of false hypotheses; the only testimony which it becomes human understanding to oppose to the authority of Newton.

My notions have, indeed, been since treated with equal superciliousness by those who have not the same title to confidence of decision; men who, though, perhaps, very learned in their own studies, have had little acquaintance with mine. Yet even this may be borne far better than the petulance of boys, whom I have seen shoot up into philosophers by experiments which I have long since made and neglected, and by improvements which I have so long transferred into my ordinary practice, that I cannot remember when I was without them.

When Sir Isaac Newton had declined the office assigned him, it was given to Mr. Molineux, one of the commissioners of the Admiralty, who engaged in it with no great inclination to favour me; but, however, thought one of the instruments, which, to confirm my own opinion, and to confute Mr. Whiston's, I had exhibited to the Admiralty, so curious or useful, that he surreptitiously copied it on paper, and clandestinely endeavoured to have it imitated by a workman for his own use.

This treatment naturally produced remonstrances and altercations, which, indeed, did not continue long, for Mr. Molineux died soon afterwards; and my proposals were for a time forgotten.

I will not, however, accuse him of designing to condemn me, without a trial; for he demanded a portion of my tables to be tried in a voyage to America, which I then thought I had reason to refuse him, not yet knowing how

difficult it was to obtain, on any terms, an actual examination.

About this time the theory of Dr. Halley was the chief subject of mathematical conversation; and though I could not but consider him as too much a rival to be appealed to as a judge, yet his reputation determined me to solicit his acquaintance and hazard his opinion. I was introduced to him by Mr. Lowthorp and Dr. Desaguliers, and put my tables into his hands; which, after having had them about twenty days under consideration, he returned in the presence of the learned Mr. Machin, and many other skilful men, with an entreaty that I would publish them speedily; for I should do infinite service to mankind.

It is one of the melancholy pleasures of an old man, to recollect the kindness of friends, whose kindness he shall experience no more. I have now none left to favour my studies; and, therefore, naturally turn my thoughts on those by whom I was favoured in better days: and I hope the vanity of age may be forgiven, when I declare that I can boast among my friends, almost every name of my time that is now remembered: and that, in that great period of mathematical competition, scarce any man failed to appear as my defender, who did not appear as my antagonist.

By these friends I was encouraged to exhibit to the Royal Society, an ocular proof of the reasonableness of my theory by a sphere of iron, on which a small compass moved in various directions, exhibiting no imperfect system of magnetical attraction. The experiment was shown by Mr. Hawkesbee, and the explanation, with which it was accompanied, was read by Dr. Mortimer. I received the thanks of the society; and was solicited to reposit my theory, properly sealed and attested, among their archives, for the information of posterity. I am informed, that this whole transaction is recorded in their minutes.

After this I withdrew from publick notice, and applied myself wholly to the continuation of my experiments, the confirmation of my system, and the completion of my tables, with no other companion than Mr. Gray, who shared

all my studies and amusements, and used to repay my communications of magnetism, with his discoveries in electricity. Thus I proceeded with incessant diligence; and, perhaps, in the zeal of inquiry, did not sufficiently reflect on the silent encroachments of time, or remember, that no man is in more danger of doing little, than he who flatters himself with abilities to do all. When I was forced out of my retirement, I came loaded with the infirmities of age, to struggle with the difficulties of a narrow fortune; cut off by the blindness of my daughter from the only assistance which I ever had; deprived by time of my patron and friends; a kind of stranger in a new world, where curiosity is now diverted to other objects, and where, having no means of ingratiating my labours, I stand the single votary of an obsolete science, the scoff of puny pupils of puny philosophers.

In this state of dereliction and depression, I have bequeathed to posterity the following table; which, if time shall verify my conjectures, will show that the variation was once known; and that mankind had once within their reach an easy method of discovering the longitude.

I will not, however, engage to maintain, that all my numbers are theoretically and minutely exact: I have not endeavoured at such degrees of accuracy as only distract inquiry without benefiting practice. The quantity of the variation has been settled partly by instruments, and partly by computation: instruments must always partake of the imperfection of the eyes and hands of those that make, and of those that use them: and computation, till it has been rectified by experiment, is always in danger of some omission in the premises, or some errour in the deduction.

It must be observed, in the use of this table, that though I name particular cities, for the sake of exciting attention, yet the tables are adjusted only to longitude and latitude. Thus when I predict that, at Prague, the variation will in the year 1800 be 24¼ W. I intend to say, that it will be such, if Prague be, as I have placed it, after the best geographers in longitude, 14 30′. E. latitude 50 40′. but that

this is its true situation I cannot be certain. The latitude of many places is unknown, and the longitude is known of very few; and even those who are unacquainted with science will be convinced that it is not easily to be found, when they are told how many degrees Dr. Halley, and the French mathematicians, place the cape of Good Hope distant from each other.

Those who would pursue this inquiry with philosophical nicety, must, likewise, procure better needles than those commonly in use. The needle, which, after long experience, I recommend to mariners, must be of pure steel, the spines and the cap of one piece, the whole length three inches, each spine containing four grains and a half of steel, and the cap thirteen grains and a half.

The common needles are so ill formed, or so unskilfully suspended, that they are affected by many causes besides magnetism; and, among other inconveniencies, have given occasion to the idle dream of a horary variation.

I doubt not but particular places may produce exceptions to my system. There may be, in many parts of the earth, bodies which obstruct or intercept the general influence of magnetism; but those interruptions do not infringe the theory. It is allowed, that water will run down a declivity, though sometimes a strong wind may force it upwards. It is granted, that the sun gives light at noon, though, in certain conjunctions, it may suffer an eclipse.

Those causes, whatever they are, that interrupt the course of the magnetical powers, are least likely to be found in the great ocean, when the earth, with all its minerals, is secluded from the compass by the vast body of uniform water. So that this method of finding the longitude, with a happy contrariety to all others, is most easy and practicable at sea.

This method, therefore, I recommend to the study and prosecution of the sailor and philosopher; and the appendant specimen I exhibit to the candid examination of the maritime nations, as a specimen of a general table,

showing the variation at all times and places for the whole revolution of the magnetick poles, which I have long ago begun, and, with just encouragement, should have long ago completed.

CONSIDERATIONS ON THE PLANS OFFERED FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF BLACKFRIARS BRIDGE.

In three letters, to the printer of the Gazetteer.

LETTER I.

SIR, Dec. 1, 1759.

THE plans which have been offered by different architects, of different reputation and abilities, for the construction of the bridge intended to be built at Blackfriars, are, by the rejection of the greater part, now reduced to a small number; in which small number, three are supposed to be much superiour to the rest; so that only three architects are now properly competitors for the honour of this great employment; by two of whom are proposed semicircular, and by the other elliptical arches.

The question is, therefore, whether an elliptical or semicircular arch is to be preferred?

The first excellence of a bridge, built for commerce, over a large river, is strength; for a bridge which cannot stand, however beautiful, will boast its beauty but a little while: the stronger arch is, therefore, to be preferred, and much more to be preferred, if, with greater strength, it has greater beauty.

Those who are acquainted with the mathematical principles of architecture, are not many; and yet fewer are they who will, upon any single occasion, endure any laborious stretch of thought, or harass their minds with un-

accustomed investigations. We shall, therefore, attempt to show the weakness of the elliptical arch, by arguments which appeal simply to common reason, and which will yet stand the test of geometrical examination.

All arches have a certain degree of weakness. No hollow building can be equally strong with a solid mass, of which every upper part presses perpendicularly upon the lower. Any weight laid upon the top of an arch, has a tendency to force that top into the vacuity below; and the arch, thus loaded on the top, stands only because the stones that form it, being wider in the upper than in the lower parts, that part that fills a wider space cannot fall through a space less wide; but the force which, laid upon a flat, would press directly downwards, is dispersed each way in a lateral direction, as the parts of a beam are pushed out to the right and left by a wedge driven between them. In proportion as the stones are wider at the top than at the bottom, they can less easily be forced downwards, and, as their lateral surfaces tend more from the centre to each side, to so much more is the pressure directed laterally towards the piers, and so much less perpendicularly towards the vacuity.

Upon this plain principle the semicircular arch may be demonstrated to excel in strength the elliptical arch, which, approaching nearer to a straight line, must be constructed with stones whose diminution downwards is very little, and of which the pressure is almost perpendicular.

It has yet been sometimes asserted by hardy ignorance, that the elliptical arch is stronger than the semicircular; or in other terms, that any mass is more strongly supported the less it rests upon the supporters. If the elliptical arch be equally strong with the semicircular; that is, if an arch, by approaching to a straight line, loses none of its stability, it will follow, that all arcuation is useless, and that the bridge may at last, without any inconvenience, consist of stone laid in straight lines from pillar to pillar. But if a straight line will bear no weight, which is evident at the first view, it is plain, likewise, that an ellipsis will bear very

little; and that, as the arch is more curved, its strength is increased.

Having thus evinced the superiour strength of the semicircular arch, we have sufficiently proved, that it ought to be preferred; but to leave no objection unprevented, we think it proper, likewise, to observe, that the elliptical arch must always appear to want elevation and dignity; and that if beauty be to be determined by suffrages, the elliptical arch will have little to boast, since the only bridge of that kind has now stood two hundred years without imitation.

If, in opposition to these arguments, and in defiance, at once, of right reason and general authority, the elliptical arch should at last be chosen, what will the world believe, than that some other motive than reason influenced the determination? And some degree of partiality cannot but be suspected by him, who has been told that one of the judges appointed to decide this question, is Mr. M—ll—r, who, having by ignorance, or thoughtlessness, already preferred the elliptical arch, will, probably, think himself obliged to maintain his own judgment, though his opinion will avail but little with the publick, when it is known that Mr. S—ps—n declares it to be false.

He that, in the list of the committee chosen for the superintendency of the bridge, reads many of the most illustrious names of this great city, will hope that the greater number will have more reverence for the opinion of posterity, than to disgrace themselves, and the metropolis of the kingdom, in compliance with any man, who, instead of voting, aspires to dictate, perhaps, without any claim to such superiority, either by greatness of birth, dignity of employment, extent of knowledge, or largeness of fortune.

LETTER II.

SIR, Dec. 8, 1759.

IN questions of general concern, there is no law of government, or rule of decency, that forbids open examination and publick discussion. I shall, therefore, not betray, by a mean apology, that right which no man has power, and, I suppose, no wise man has desire to refuse me; but shall consider the letter published by you last Friday, in defence of Mr. M—'s[r] design for a new bridge.

Mr. M—— proposes elliptical arches. It has been objected, that elliptical arches are weak; and, therefore, improper for a bridge of commerce, in a country where greater weights are ordinarily carried by land, than, perhaps, in any other part of the world. That there is an elliptical bridge at Florence is allowed, but the objectors maintain, that its stability is so much doubted, that carts are not permitted to pass over it.

To this no answer is made, but that it was built for coaches; and if it had been built for carts, it would have been made stronger: thus all the controvertists agree, that the bridge is too weak for carts; and it is of little importance, whether carts are prohibited, because the bridge is weak, or whether the architect, knowing that carts were prohibited, voluntarily constructed a weak bridge. The instability of the elliptical arch has been sufficiently proved by argument, and Ammanuti's attempt has proved it by example.

The iron rail, whether gilt or varnished, appears to me unworthy of debate. I suppose every judicious eye will discern it to be minute and trifling, equally unfit to make a part of a great design, whatever be its colour. I shall only observe how little the writer understands his own positions, when he recommends it to be cast in whole pieces from pier to pier. That iron forged is stronger than iron cast, every smith can inform him; and if it be cast in large

[r] Mr. Milne.

pieces, the fracture of a single bar must be repaired by a new piece.

The abrupt rise, which is feared from firm circular arches, may be easily prevented, by a little extension of the abutment at each end, which will take away the objection, and add almost nothing to the expense.

The whole of the argument in favour of Mr. M——, is only, that there is an elliptical bridge at Florence, and an iron balustrade at Rome; the bridge is owned to be weak, and the iron balustrade we consider as mean, and are loath that our own country should unite two follies in a publick work.

The architrave of Perrault, which has been pompously produced, bears nothing but its entablature; and is so far from owing its support to the artful section of the stone, that it is held together by cramps of iron; to which I am afraid Mr. M—— must have recourse, if he persists in his ellipsis, or, to use the words of his vindicator, forms his arch of four segments of circles drawn from four different centres.

That Mr. M—— obtained the prize of the architecture at Rome, a few months ago, is willingly confessed; nor do his opponents doubt that he obtained it by deserving it. May he continue to obtain whatever he deserves; but let it not be presumed that a prize granted at Rome, implies an irresistible degree of skill. The competition is only between boys, and the prize, given to excite laudable industry, not to reward consummate excellence. Nor will the suffrage of the Romans much advance any name among those who know, what no man of science will deny, that architecture has, for some time, degenerated at Rome to the lowest state, and that the pantheon is now deformed by petty decorations.

I am, Sir, yours, &c.

LETTER III.

SIR, Dec. 15, 1759.

IT is the common fate of erroneous positions, that they are betrayed by defence, and obscured by explanation; that their authors deviate from the main question into incidental disquisitions, and raise a mist where they should let in light.

Of all these concomitants of errours, the letter of Dec. 10, in favour of elliptical arches, has afforded examples. A great part of it is spent upon digressions. The writer allows, that the first excellence of a bridge is undoubtedly strength: but this concession affords him an opportunity of telling us, that strength, or provision against decay, has its limits; and of mentioning the monument and cupola, without any advance towards evidence or argument.

The first excellence of a bridge is now allowed to be strength; and it has been asserted, that a semi-ellipsis has less strength than a semicircle. To this he first answers, that granting this position for a moment, the semi-ellipsis may yet have strength sufficient for the purposes of commerce. This grant, which was made but for a moment, needed not to have been made at all; for, before he concludes his letter, he undertakes to prove, that the elliptical arch must, in all respects, be superiour in strength to the semicircle. For this daring assertion he made way by the intermediate paragraphs, in which he observes, that the convexity of a semi-ellipsis may be increased at will to any degree that strength may require; which is, that an elliptical arch may be made less elliptical, to be made less weak; or that an arch, which, by its elliptical form, is superiour in strength to the semicircle, may become almost as strong as a semicircle, by being made almost semicircular.

That the longer diameter of an ellipsis may be shortened, till it shall differ little from a circle, is indisputably true; but why should the writer forget the semicircle differs as little from such an ellipsis? It seems that the difference, whether small or great, is to the advantage of the semi-

circle; for he does not promise that the elliptical arch, with all the convexity that his imagination can confer, will stand without cramps of iron, and melted lead, and large stones, and a very thick arch; assistances which the semicircle does not require, and which can be yet less required by a semi-ellipsis, which is, in all respects, superiour in strength.

Of a man who loves opposition so well, as to be thus at variance with himself, little doubt can be made of his contrariety to others; nor do I think myself entitled to complain of disregard from one, with whom the performances of antiquity have so little weight; yet, in defiance of all this contemptuous superiority, I must again venture to declare, that a straight line will bear no weight; being convinced, that not even the science of Vasari can make that form strong which the laws of nature have condemned to weakness. By the position, that a straight line will bear nothing, is meant, that it receives no strength from straightness; for that many bodies, laid in straight lines, will support weight by the cohesion of their parts, every one has found, who has seen dishes on a shelf, or a thief upon the gallows. It is not denied, that stones may be so crushed together by enormous pressure on each side, that a heavy mass may safely be laid upon them; but the strength must be derived merely from the lateral resistance; and the line, so loaded, will be itself part of the load.

The semi-elliptical arch has one recommendation yet unexamined: we are told, that it is difficult of execution. Why difficulty should be chosen for its own sake, I am not able to discover; but it must not be forgotten, that, as the convexity is increased, the difficulty is lessened; and I know not well, whether this writer, who appears equally ambitious of difficulty, and studious of strength, will wish to increase the convexity for the gain of strength, or to lessen it for the love of difficulty.

The friend of Mr. M——, however he may be mistaken in some of his opinions, does not want the appearance of reason, when he prefers facts to theories; and that I may

not dismiss the question without some appeal to facts, I will borrow an example, suggested by a great artist, and recommended to those who may still doubt which of the two arches is the stronger, to press an egg first on the ends, and then upon the sides.

I am, Sir, yours, &c.

SOME THOUGHTS ON AGRICULTURE,

BOTH ANCIENT AND MODERN,

With an account of the honour due to an English farmer[a].

AGRICULTURE, in the primeval ages, was the common parent of traffick; for the opulence of mankind then consisted in cattle, and the product of tillage, which are now very essential for the promotion of trade in general, but more particularly so to such nations as are most abundant in cattle, corn, and fruits. The labour of the farmer gives employment to the manufacturer, and yields a support for the other parts of the community: it is now the spring which sets the whole grand machine of commerce in motion; and the sail could not be spread without the assistance of the plough. But though the farmers are of such utility in a state, we find them, in general, too much disregarded among the politer kind of people in the present age; while we cannot help observing the honour that antiquity has always paid to the profession of the husbandman; which naturally leads us into some reflections upon that occasion.

Though mines of gold and silver should be exhausted, and the specie made of them lost; though diamonds and pearls should remain concealed in the bowels of the earth, and the womb of the sea; though commerce with strangers

[a] From the Universal Visiter, for February, 1756, p. 59.—Smart, the poet, had a considerable hand in this miscellany. The very first sentence, however, may convince any reader that Dr. Johnson did not write these Thoughts: they are inserted here merely as an introduction to the Further Thoughts, which follow, and which are undoubtedly his.

be prohibited; though all arts, which have no other object than splendour and embellishment, should be abolished; yet the fertility of the earth alone would afford an abundant supply for the occasions of an industrious people, by furnishing subsistence for them, and such armies as should be mustered in their defence. We, therefore, ought not to be surprised, that agriculture was in so much honour among the ancients; for it ought rather to seem wonderful that it should ever cease to be so, and that the most necessary and most indispensable of all professions should have fallen into any contempt.

Agriculture was in no part of the world in higher consideration than Egypt, where it was the particular object of government and policy; nor was any country ever better peopled, richer, or more powerful. The satrapæ, among the Assyrians and Persians, were rewarded, if the lands in their governments were well cultivated; but were punished, if that part of their duty was neglected. Africa abounded in corn; but the most famous countries were Thrace, Sardinia, and Sicily.

Cato, the censor, has justly called Sicily the magazine and nursing mother of the Roman people, who were supplied from thence with almost all their corn, both for the use of the city, and the subsistence of her armies: though we also find in Livy, that the Romans received no inconsiderable quantities of corn from Sardinia. But, when Rome had made herself mistress of Carthage and Alexandria, Africa and Egypt became her storehouses; for those cities sent such numerous fleets every year, freighted with corn, to Rome, that Alexandria alone annually supplied twenty millions of bushels: and, when the harvest happened to fail in one of these provinces, the other came in to its aid, and supported the metropolis of the world, which, without this supply, would have been in danger of perishing by famine. Rome actually saw herself reduced to this condition under Augustus; for there remained only three days' provision of corn in the city: and that prince was so full of tenderness for the people, that he had re-

solved to poison himself, if the expected fleets did not arrive before the expiration of that time; but they came; and the preservation of the Romans was attributed to the good fortune of their emperour: but wise precautions were taken to avoid the like danger for the future.

When the seat of empire was transplanted to Constantinople, that city was supplied in the same manner: and when the emperour, Septimius Severus, died, there was corn in the publick magazines for seven years, expending daily 75,000 bushels in bread, for 600,000 men.

The ancients were no less industrious in the cultivation of the vine than in that of corn, though they applied themselves to it later: for Noah planted it by order, and discovered the use that might be made of the fruit, by pressing out and preserving the juice. The vine was carried by the offspring of Noah into the several countries of the world; but Asia was the first to experience the sweets of this gift; from whence it was imparted to Europe and Africa. Greece and Italy, which were distinguished in so many other respects, were particularly so by the excellency of their wines. Greece was most celebrated for the wines of Cyprus, Lesbos, and Chio; the former of which is in great esteem at present, though the cultivation of the vine has been generally suppressed in the Turkish dominions. As the Romans were indebted to the Grecians for the arts and sciences, so were they, likewise, for the improvement of their wines; the best of which were produced in the country of Capua, and were called the Massick, Calenian, Formian, Cæcuban, and Falernian, so much celebrated by Horace. Domitian passed an edict for destroying all the vines, and that no more should be planted throughout the greatest part of the west; which continued almost two hundred years afterwards, when the emperour Probus employed his soldiers in planting vines in Europe, in the same manner as Hannibal had formerly employed his troops in planting olive trees in Africa. Some of the ancients have endeavoured to prove, that the cultivation of vines is more beneficial than any other kind of

husbandry: but, if this was thought so in the time of Columella, it is very different at present; nor were all the ancients of his opinion, for several gave the preference to pasture lands.

The breeding of cattle has always been considered as an important part of agriculture. The riches of Abraham, Laban, and Job, consisted in their flocks and herds. We also find from Latinus in Virgil, and Ulysses in Homer, that the wealth of those princes consisted in cattle. It was, likewise, the same among the Romans, till the introduction of money, which put a value upon commodities, and established a new kind of barter. Varro has not disdained to give an extensive account of all the beasts that are of any use to the country, either for tillage, breed, carriage, or other conveniencies of man. And Cato, the censor, was of opinion, that the feeding of cattle was the most certain and speedy method of enriching a country.

Luxury, avarice, injustice, violence, and ambition, take up their ordinary residence in populous cities; while the hard and laborious life of the husbandman will not admit of these vices. The honest farmer lives in a wise and happy state, which inclines him to justice, temperance, sobriety, sincerity, and every virtue that can dignify human nature. This gave room for the poets to feign, that Astræa, the goddess of justice, had her last residence among husbandmen, before she quitted the earth. Hesiod and Virgil have brought the assistance of the Muses in praise of agriculture. Kings, generals, and philosophers, have not thought it unworthy their birth, rank, and genius, to leave precepts to posterity upon the utility of the husbandman's profession. Hiero, Attalus, and Archelaus, kings of Syracuse, Pergamus, and Cappadocia, have composed books for supporting and augmenting the fertility of their different countries. The Carthaginian general, Mago, wrote twenty-eight volumes upon this subject; and Cato, the censor, followed his example. Nor have Plato, Xenophon, and Aristotle, omitted this article, which makes an essential part of their politicks. And Cicero, speaking

of the writings of Xenophon, says, " How fully and excellently does he, in that book called his Economicks, set out the advantages of husbandry, and a country life!"

When Britain was subject to the Romans, she annually supplied them with great quantities of corn; and the isle of Anglesea was then looked upon as the granary for the western provinces; but the Britons, both under the Romans and Saxons, were employed like slaves at the plough. On the intermixture of the Danes and Normans, possessions were better regulated, and the state of vassalage gradually declined, till it was entirely worn off under the reigns of Henry the seventh and Edward the sixth; for they hurt the old nobility by favouring the commons, who grew rich by trade, and purchased estates.

The wines of France, Portugal, and Spain, are now the best; while Italy can only boast of the wine made in Tuscany. The breeding of cattle is now chiefly confined to Denmark and Ireland. The corn of Sicily is still in great esteem, as well as what is produced in the northern countries: but England is the happiest spot in the universe for all the principal kinds of agriculture, and especially its great produce of corn.

The improvement of our landed estates is the enrichment of the kingdom; for, without this, how could we carry on our manufactures, or prosecute our commerce? We should look upon the English farmer as the most useful member of society. His arable grounds not only supply his fellow-subjects with all kinds of the best grain, but his industry enables him to export great quantities to other kingdoms, which might otherwise starve; particularly Spain and Portugal; for, in one year, there have been exported 51,520 quarters of barley, 219,781 of malt, 1,920 of oatmeal, 1,329 of rye, and 153,343 of wheat; the bounty on which amounted to 72,433 pounds. What a fund of treasure arises from his pasture lands, which breed such innumerable flocks of sheep, and afford such fine herds of cattle, to feed Britons, and clothe mankind! He rears flax and hemp for the making of linen; while his

plantations of apples and hops supply him with generous kinds of liquors.

The land-tax, when at four shillings in the pound, produces 2,000,000 pounds a year. This arises from the labour of the husbandman: it is a great sum; but how greatly is it increased by the means it furnishes for trade! Without the industry of the farmer, the manufacturer could have no goods to supply the merchant, nor the merchant find any employment for the mariners: trade would be stagnated; riches would be of no advantage to the great; and labour of no service to the poor.

> The Romans, as historians all allow,
> Sought, in extreme distress, the rural plough;
> *Io triumphe!* for the village swain,
> Retired to be a nobleman[t] again.

FURTHER THOUGHTS ON AGRICULTURE[u].

At my last visit, I took the liberty of mentioning a subject, which, I think, is not considered with attention proportionate to its importance. Nothing can more fully prove the ingratitude of mankind, a crime often charged upon them, and often denied, than the little regard which the disposers of honorary rewards have paid to agriculture, which is treated as a subject so remote from common life, by all those who do not immediately hold the plough, or give fodder to the ox, that I think there is room to question, whether a great part of mankind has yet been informed that life is sustained by the fruits of the earth. I was once, indeed, provoked to ask a lady of great eminence for genius, "Whether she knew of what bread is made?"

I have already observed, how differently agriculture was considered by the heroes and wise men of the Roman commonwealth, and shall now only add, that even after the emperours had made great alteration in the system of

[t] Cincinnatus.

[u] From the Visiter for March, 1756, p. 111.

life, and taught men to portion out their esteem to other qualities than usefulness, agriculture still maintained its reputation, and was taught by the polite and elegant Celsus among the other arts.

The usefulness of agriculture I have already shown; I shall now, therefore, prove its necessity: and, having before declared, that it produces the chief riches of a nation, I shall proceed to show, that it gives its only riches, the only riches which we can call our own, and of which we need not fear either deprivation or diminution.

Of nations, as of individuals, the first blessing is independence. Neither the man nor the people can be happy to whom any human power can deny the necessaries or conveniencies of life. There is no way of living without the need of foreign assistance, but by the product of our own land, improved by our own labour. Every other source of plenty is perishable or casual.

Trade and manufactures must be confessed often to enrich countries; and we ourselves are indebted to them for those ships by which we now command the sea from the equator to the poles, and for those sums with which we have shown ourselves able to arm the nations of the north in defence of regions in the western hemisphere. But trade and manufactures, however profitable, must yield to the cultivation of lands in usefulness and dignity.

Commerce, however we may please ourselves with the contrary opinion, is one of the daughters of Fortune, inconstant and deceitful as her mother; she chooses her residence where she is least expected, and shifts her abode when her continuance is, in appearance, most firmly settled. Who can read of the present distresses of the Genoese, whose only choice now remaining is, from what monarch they shall solicit protection? Who can see the Hanseatick towns in ruins, where, perhaps, the inhabitants do not always equal the number of the houses, but he will say to himself, these are the cities, whose trade enabled them once to give laws to the world, to whose merchants princes sent their jewels in pawn, from whose

treasuries armies were paid, and navies supplied? And who can then forbear to consider trade as a weak and uncertain basis of power, and wish to his own country greatness more solid, and felicity more durable?

It is apparent, that every trading nation flourishes, while it can be said to flourish, by the courtesy of others. We cannot compel any people to buy from us, or to sell to us. A thousand accidents may prejudice them in favour of our rivals; the workmen of another nation may labour for less price, or some accidental improvement, or natural advantage, may procure a just preference to their commodities; as experience has shown, that there is no work of the hands, which, at different times, is not best performed in different places.

Traffick, even while it continues in its state of prosperity, must owe its success to agriculture; the materials of manufacture are the produce of the earth. The wool which we weave into cloth, the wood which is formed into cabinets, the metals which are forged into weapons, are supplied by nature with the help of art. Manufactures, indeed, and profitable manufactures, are sometimes raised from imported materials, but then we are subjected, a second time, to the caprice of our neighbours. The natives of Lombardy might easily resolve to retain their silk at home, and employ workmen of their own to weave it. And this will certainly be done when they grow wise and industrious, when they have sagacity to discern their true interest, and vigour to pursue it.

Mines are generally considered as the great sources of wealth, and superficial observers have thought the possession of great quantities of precious metals the first national happiness. But Europe has long seen, with wonder and contempt, the poverty of Spain, who thought herself exempted from the labour of tilling the ground, by the conquest of Peru, with its veins of silver. Time, however, has taught even this obstinate and haughty nation, that without agriculture they may, indeed, be the transmitters of money, but can never be the possessours. They may dig

it out of the earth, but must immediately send it away to purchase cloth or bread, and it must at last remain with some people wise enough to sell much, and to buy little; to live upon their own lands, without a wish for those things which nature has denied them.

Mines are themselves of no use, without some kind of agriculture. We have, in our own country, inexhaustible stores of iron, which lie useless in the ore for want of wood. It was never the design of Providence to feed man without his own concurrence; we have from nature only what we cannot provide for ourselves; she gives us wild fruits, which art must meliorate, and drossy metals, which labour must refine.

Particular metals are valuable, because they are scarce; and they are scarce, because the mines that yield them are emptied in time. But the surface of the earth is more liberal than its caverns. The field, which is this autumn laid naked by the sickle, will be covered, in the succeeding summer, by a new harvest; the grass, which the cattle are devouring, shoots up again when they have passed over it.

Agriculture, therefore, and agriculture alone, can support us without the help of others, in certain plenty, and genuine dignity. Whatever we buy from without, the sellers may refuse; whatever we sell, manufactured by art, the purchasers may reject; but, while our ground is covered with corn and cattle, we can want nothing; and if imagination should grow sick of native plenty, and call for delicacies or embellishments from other countries, there is nothing which corn and cattle will not purchase.

Our country is, perhaps, beyond all others, productive of things necessary to life. The pineapple thrives better between the tropicks, and better furs are found in the northern regions. But let us not envy these unnecessary privileges. Mankind cannot subsist upon the indulgences of nature, but must be supported by her more common gifts. They must feed upon bread, and be clothed with wool; and the nation that can furnish these universal com-

modities, may have her ships welcomed at a thousand ports, or sit at home and receive the tribute of foreign countries, enjoy their arts, or treasure up their gold.

It is well known to those who have examined the state of other countries, that the vineyards of France are more than equivalent to the mines of America; and that one great use of Indian gold, and Peruvian silver, is to procure the wines of Champaigne and Burgundy. The advantage is, indeed, always rising on the side of France, who will certainly have wines, when Spain, by a thousand natural or accidental causes, may want silver. But, surely, the valleys of England have more certain stores of wealth. Wines are chosen by caprice; the products of France have not always been equally esteemed; but there never was any age, or people, that reckoned bread among superfluities, when once it was known. The price of wheat and barley suffers not any variation, but what is caused by the uncertainty of seasons.

I am far from intending to persuade my countrymen to quit all other employments for that of manuring the ground. I mean only to prove, that we have, at home, all that we can want, and that, therefore, we need feel no great anxiety about the schemes of other nations for improving their arts, or extending their traffick. But there is no necessity to infer, that we should cease from commerce, before the revolution of things shall transfer it to some other regions! Such vicissitudes the world has often seen; and, therefore, such we have reason to expect. We hear many clamours of declining trade, which are not, in my opinion, always true; and many imputations of that decline to governours and ministers, which may be sometimes just, and sometimes calumnious. But it is foolish to imagine, that any care or policy can keep commerce at a stand, which almost every nation has enjoyed and lost, and which we must expect to lose as we have long enjoyed.

There is some danger, lest our neglect of agriculture should hasten its departure. Our industry has, for many ages, been employed in destroying the woods which our

ancestors have planted. It is well known that commerce is carried on by ships, and that ships are built out of trees; and, therefore, when I travel over naked plains, to which tradition has preserved the name of forests, or see hills arising on either hand barren and useless, I cannot forbear to wonder, how that commerce, of which we promise ourselves the perpetuity, shall be continued by our descendants; nor can restrain a sigh, when I think on the time, a time at no great distance, when our neighbours may deprive us of our naval influence, by refusing us their timber.

By agriculture only can commerce be perpetuated; and by agriculture alone can we live in plenty without intercourse with other nations. This, therefore, is the great art, which every government ought to protect, every proprietor of lands to practise, and every inquirer into nature to improve.

CONSIDERATIONS ON THE CORN LAWS[x].

By what causes the necessaries of life have risen to a price, at which a great part of the people are unable to procure them, how the present scarcity may be remedied, and calamities of the same kind may, for the future, be prevented, is an inquiry of the first importance; an inquiry, before which all the considerations which commonly busy the legislature vanish from the view.

The interruption of trade, though it may distress part of the community, leaves the rest power to communicate relief: the decay of one manufacture may be compensated by the advancement of another: a defeat may be repaired by victory: a rupture with one nation may be balanced by an alliance with another. These are partial and slight misfortunes, which leave us still in the possession of our chief comforts. They may lop some of our superfluous pleasures, and repress some of our exorbitant hopes; but we may still retain the essential part of civil and of private happiness—the security of law, and the tranquillity of content. They are small obstructions of the stream, which raise a foam and noise, where they happen to be found, but, at a little distance, are neither seen nor felt, and suffer the main current to pass forward in its natural course.

But scarcity is an evil that extends at once to the whole community: that neither leaves quiet to the poor, nor

[x] These Considerations, for which we are indebted to Mr. Malone, who published them in 1808, or rather to his liberal publisher, Mr. Payne, were, in the opinion of Mr. Malone, written in November, 1766, when the policy of the parliamentary bounty on the exportation of corn became naturally a subject of discussion. The harvest in that year had been so deficient, and corn had risen to so high a price, that in the months of September and October there had been many insurrections in the midland counties, to which Dr. Johnson alludes; and which were of so alarming a kind, that it was necessary to repress them by military force.

safety to the rich; that, in its approaches, distresses all the subordinate ranks of mankind; and, in its extremity, must subvert government, drive the populace upon their rulers, and end in bloodshed and massacre. Those who want the supports of life will seize them wherever they can be found. If in any place there are more than can be fed, some must be expelled, or some must be destroyed.

Of this dreadful scene there is no immediate danger; but there is already evil sufficient to deserve and require all our diligence and all our wisdom. The miseries of the poor are such as cannot easily be borne; such as have already incited them, in many parts of the kingdom, to an open defiance of government, and produced one of the greatest of political evils—the necessity of ruling by immediate force.

Cæsar declared, after the battle of Munda, that he had often fought for victory, but that he had, that day, fought for life. We have often deliberated, how we should prosper; we are now to inquire, how we shall subsist.

The present scarcity is imputed, by some, to the bounty for exporting corn, which is considered as having a necessary and perpetual tendency to pour the grain of this country into other nations.

This position involves two questions: whether the present scarcity has been caused by the bounty? and whether the bounty is likely to produce scarcity in future times?

It is an uncontroverted principle, that "sublata causa tollitur effectus;" if, therefore, the effect continues when the supposed cause has ceased, that effect must be imputed to some other agency.

The bounty has ceased, and the exportation would still continue, if exportation were permitted. The true reason of the scarcity is the failure of the harvest; and the cause of exportation is the like failure in other countries, where they grow less, and where they are, therefore, always nearer to the danger of want.

This want is such, that in countries where money is at a much higher value than with us, the inhabitants are yet

desirous to buy our corn at a price to which our own markets have not risen.

If we consider the state of those countries, which, being accustomed to buy our corn cheaper than ourselves, when it was cheap, are now reduced to the necessity of buying it dearer than ourselves, when it is dear, we shall yet have reason to rejoice in our own exemption from the extremity of this wide-extended calamity; and, if it be necessary, to inquire why we suffer scarcity, it may be fit to consider, likewise, why we suffer yet less scarcity than our neighbours.

That the bounty upon corn has produced plenty, is apparent:

Because, ever since the grant of the bounty, agriculture has increased; scarce a sessions has passed without a law for enclosing commons and waste grounds:

Much land has been subjected to tillage, which lay uncultivated with little profit:

Yet, though the quantity of land has been thus increased, the rent, which is the price of land, has generally increased at the same time.

That more land is appropriated to tillage, is a proof that more corn is raised; and that the rents have not fallen, proves that no more is raised than can readily be sold.

But it is urged, that exportation, though it increases our produce, diminishes our plenty; that the merchant has more encouragement for exportation than the farmer for agriculture.

This is a paradox which all the principles of commerce and all the experience of policy concur to confute. Whatever is done for gain, will be done more, as more gain is to be obtained.

Let the effects of the bounty be minutely considered.

The state of every country, with respect to corn, is varied by the chances of the year.

Those to whom we sell our corn, must have every year either more corn than they want, or less than they

want. We, likewise, are naturally subject to the same varieties.

When they have corn equal to their wants, or more, the bounty has no effect; for they will not buy what they do not want, unless our exuberance be such as tempts them to store it for another year. This case must suppose that our produce is redundant and useless to ourselves; and, therefore, the profit of exportation produces no inconvenience.

When they want corn, they must buy of us, and buy at a higher price: in this case, if we have corn more than enough for ourselves, we are again benefited by supplying them.

But they may want when we have no superfluity. When our markets rise, the bounty ceases; and, therefore, produces no evil. They cannot buy our corn but at a higher rate than it is sold at home. If their necessities, as now has happened, force them to give a higher price, that event is no longer to be charged upon the bounty. We may then stop our corn in our ports, and pour it back upon our own markets.

It is, in all cases, to be considered, what events are physical and certain, and what are political and arbitrary.

The first effect of the bounty is the increase of agriculture, and, by consequence, the promotion of plenty. This is an effect physically good, and morally certain. While men are desirous to be rich, where there is profit there will be diligence. If much corn can be sold, much will be raised.

The second effect of the bounty is the diminution by exportation of that product which it occasioned. But this effect is political and arbitrary; we have it wholly in our own hands; we can prescribe its limits, and regulate its quantity. Whenever we feel want, or fear it, we retain our corn, and feed ourselves upon that which was sown and raised to feed other nations.

It is, perhaps, impossible for human wisdom to go further, than to contrive a law of which the good is certain

and uniform, and the evil, though possible in itself, yet always subject to certain and effectual restraints.

This is the true state of the bounty upon corn: it certainly and necessarily increases our crops, and can never lessen them but by our own permission.

That, notwithstanding the bounty, there have been, from time to time, years of scarcity, cannot be denied. But who can regulate the seasons? In the dearest years we owe to the bounty that they have not been dearer. We must always suppose part of our ground sown for our own consumption, and part in hope of a foreign sale. The time sometimes comes, when the product of all this land is scarcely sufficient: but if the whole be too little, how great would have been the deficiency, if we had sown only that part which was designed for ourselves!

"But, perhaps, if exportation were less encouraged, the superfluous stores of plentiful years might be laid up by the farmer against years of scarcity."

This may be justly answered by affirming, that, if exportation were discouraged, we should have no years of plenty. Cheapness is produced by the possibility of dearness. Our farmers, at present, plough and sow with the hope that some country will always be in want, and that they shall grow rich by supplying. Indefinite hopes are always carried by the frailty of human nature beyond reason. While, therefore, exportation is encouraged, as much corn will be raised as the farmer can hope to sell, and, therefore, generally more than can be sold at the price of which he dreamed, when he ploughed and sowed.

The greatest part of our corn is well known to be raised by those, who pay rent for the ground which they employ, and of whom, few can bear to delay the sale of one year's produce to another.

It is, therefore, vain to hope that large stocks of grain will ever remain in private hands: he that has not sold the corn of last year, will, with diffidence and reluctance, till his field again; the accumulation of a few years would end in

a vacation of agriculture, and the husbandman would apply himself to some more profitable calling.

If the exportation of corn were totally prohibited, the quantity, possible to be consumed among us, would be quickly known, and, being known, would rarely be exceeded; for why should corn be gathered which cannot be sold? We should, therefore, have little superfluity in the most favourable seasons; for the farmer, like the rest of mankind, acts in hope of success, and the harvest seldom outgoes the expectation of the spring. But for droughts or blights, we should never be provided: any intemperature of seasons would reduce us to distress, which we now only read of in our histories; what is now scarcity would then be famine.

What would be caused by prohibiting exportation, will be caused, in a less degree, by obstructing it, and, in some degree, by every deduction of encouragement; as we lessen hope, we shall lessen labour; as we lessen labour, we shall lessen plenty.

It must always be steadily remembered, that the good of the bounty is certain, and evil avoidable; that by the hope of exportation corn will be increased, and that this increase may be kept at home.

Plenty can only be produced by encouraging agriculture; and agriculture can be encouraged only by making it gainful. No influence can dispose the farmer to sow what he cannot sell; and, if he is not to have the chance of scarcity in his favour, he will take care that there never shall be plenty.

The truth of these principles our ancestors discovered by reason, and the French have now found it by experience. In this regulation we have the honour of being masters to those, who, in commercial policy, have been long accounted the masters of the world. Their prejudices, their emulation, and their vanity, have, at last, submitted to learn of us how to ensure the bounties of nature; and it forms a strange vicissitude of opinions, that should incline us to repeal the law which our rivals are adopting.

It may be speciously enough proposed, that the bounty should be discontinued sooner. Of this every man will have his own opinion; which, as no general principles can reach it, will always seem to him more reasonable than that of another. This is a question of which the state is always changing with time and place, and which it is, therefore, very difficult to state or to discuss.

It may, however, be considered, that the change of old establishments is always an evil; and that, therefore, where the good of the change is not certain and constant, it is better to preserve that reverence and that confidence, which is produced by consistency of conduct and permanency of laws:

That, since the bounty was so fixed, the price of money has been much diminished; so that the bounty does not operate so far as when it was first fixed, but the price at which it ceases, though nominally the same, has, in effect and in reality, gradually diminished.

It is difficult to discover any reason why that bounty, which has produced so much good, and has hitherto produced no harm, should be withdrawn or abated. It is possible, that if it were reduced lower, it would still be the motive of agriculture, and the cause of plenty; but why we should desert experience for conjecture, and exchange a known for a possible good, will not easily be discovered. If, by a balance of probabilities, in which a grain of dust may turn the scale—or, by a curious scheme of calculation, in which, if one postulate in a thousand be erroneous, the deduction which promises plenty may end in famine;—if, by a specious mode of uncertain ratiocination, the critical point at which the bounty should stop, might seem to be discovered, I shall still continue to believe that it is more safe to trust what we have already tried; and cannot but think bread a product of too much importance to be made the sport of subtilty, and the topick of hypothetical disputation.

The advantage of the bounty is evident and irrefragable. Since the bounty was given, multitudes eat wheat who did

not eat it before, and yet the price of wheat has abated. What more is to be hoped from any change of practice? An alteration cannot make our condition better, and is, therefore, very likely to make it worse [y].

[y] This little essay on the Corn Laws was written by Dr. Johnson, which is in the very best style of that great master of reason, so early as the year 1766; and at a period when subjects of this kind were but imperfectly understood, even by those who had devoted themselves to their study. It is truly admirable to see with what vigorous alacrity his powerful mind could apply itself to an investigation so foreign from his habitual occupations. We do not know that a more sound, enlightened argument, in favour of the bounty on exportation, could be collected from all that has since been published on the subject; and, convinced as we are of the radical insufficiency of that argument, it is impossible not to be delighted with the clearness and force of the statement. There are few of his smaller productions that show the great range of Johnson's capacity in a more striking light.—Edin. Review, October, 1809. p. 175.—Ed.

A COMPLETE VINDICATION

OF THE

LICENSERS OF THE STAGE,

FROM THE

MALICIOUS AND SCANDALOUS ASPERSIONS

OF

MR. BROOKE,

AUTHOR OF GUSTAVUS VASA;

WITH A PROPOSAL FOR MAKING THE OFFICE OF LICENSER MORE EXTENSIVE AND EFFECTUAL.

BY AN IMPARTIAL HAND.[1]

IT is generally agreed by the writers of all parties, that few crimes are equal, in their degree of guilt, to that of calumniating a good and gentle, or defending a wicked and oppressive administration.

It is, therefore, with the utmost satisfaction of mind, that I reflect how often I have employed my pen in vindication of the present ministry, and their dependants and adherents; how often I have detected the specious fallacies of the advocates for independence; how often I have softened the obstinacy of patriotism; and how often triumphed over the clamour of opposition.

I have, indeed, observed but one set of men, upon whom all my arguments have been thrown away; whom neither flattery can draw to compliance, nor threats reduce to submission; and who have, notwithstanding all expedients that either invention or experience could suggest,

[1] This admirable piece of irony was first printed in the year 1739. A comparison of its sarcastic strokes with the serious arguments of lord Chesterfield's speech in the house of lords against the bill for licensing the stage, will be both amusing and instructive.—ED.

continued to exert their abilities in a vigorous and constant opposition of all our measures.

The unaccountable behaviour of these men, the enthusiastick resolution with which, after a hundred successive defeats, they still renewed their attacks; the spirit with which they continued to repeat their arguments in the senate, though they found a majority determined to condemn them; and the inflexibility with which they rejected all offers of places and preferments, at last excited my curiosity so far, that I applied myself to inquire, with great diligence, into the real motives of their conduct, and to discover what principle it was that had force to inspire such unextinguishable zeal, and to animate such unwearied efforts.

For this reason I attempted to cultivate a nearer acquaintance with some of the chiefs of that party, and imagined that it would be necessary, for some time, to dissemble my sentiments, that I might learn theirs.

Dissimulation, to a true politician, is not difficult, and, therefore, I readily assumed the character of a proselyte; but found, that their principle of action was no other, than that which they make no scruple of avowing in the most publick manner, notwithstanding the contempt and ridicule to which it every day exposes them, and the loss of those honours and profits from which it excludes them.

This wild passion, or principle, is a kind of fanaticism by which they distinguish those of their own party, and which they look upon as a certain indication of a great mind. *We* have no name for it *at court;* but, among themselves, they term it by a kind of cant phrase, "a regard for posterity."

This passion seems to predominate in all their conduct, to regulate every action of their lives, and sentiment of their minds: I have heard L——— and P—[a], when they have made a vigorous opposition, or blasted the blossom of some ministerial scheme, cry out, in the height of their ex-

[a] Lyttelton and Pitt.

ultations, "This will deserve the thanks of posterity!" And when their adversaries, as it much more frequently falls out, have outnumbered and overthrown them, they will say, with an air of revenge and a kind of gloomy triumph, "Posterity will curse you for this."

It is common among men, under the influence of any kind of phrensy, to believe that all the world has the same odd notions that disorder their own imaginations. Did these unhappy men, these deluded patriots, know how little we are concerned about posterity, they would never attempt to fright us with their curses, or tempt us to a neglect of our own interest by a prospect of their gratitude.

But so strong is their infatuation, that they seem to have forgotten even the primary law of self-preservation; for they sacrifice, without scruple, every flattering hope, every darling enjoyment, and every satisfaction of life, to this ruling passion, and appear, in every step, to consult not so much their own advantage, as that of posterity.

Strange delusion! that can confine all their thoughts to a race of men whom they neither know, nor can know; from whom nothing is to be feared, nor any thing expected; who cannot even bribe a special jury, nor have so much as a single riband to bestow.

This fondness for posterity is a kind of madness which at Rome was once almost epidemical, and infected even the women and the children. It reigned there till the entire destruction of Carthage; after which it began to be less general, and in a few years afterwards a remedy was discovered, by which it was almost entirely extinguished.

In England it never prevailed in any such degree: some few of the ancient barons seem, indeed, to have been disordered by it; but the contagion has been, for the most part, timely checked, and our ladies have been generally free.

But there has been, in every age, a set of men, much admired and reverenced, who have affected to be always talking of posterity, and have laid out their lives upon the com-

position of poems, for the sake of being applauded by this imaginary generation.

The present poets I reckon amongst the most inexorable enemies of our most excellent ministry, and much doubt whether any method will effect the cure of a distemper, which, in this class of men, may be termed, not an accidental disease, but a defect in their original frame and constitution.

Mr. Brooke, a name I mention with all the detestation suitable to my character, could not forbear discovering this depravity of his mind in his very prologue, which is filled with sentiments so wild, and so much unheard of among those who frequent levees and courts, that I much doubt, whether the zealous licenser proceeded any further in his examination of his performance.

He might easily perceive that a man,

> Who bade his moral beam through every age,

was too much a bigot to exploded notions, to compose a play which he could license without manifest hazard of his office, a hazard which no man would incur untainted with the love of posterity.

We cannot, therefore, wonder that an author, wholly possessed by this passion, should vent his resentment for the licenser's just refusal, in virulent advertisements, insolent complaints, and scurrilous assertions of his rights and privileges, and proceed, in defiance of authority, to solicit a subscription.

This temper, which I have been describing, is almost always complicated with ideas of the high prerogatives of human nature, of a sacred unalienable birthright, which no man has conferred upon us, and which neither kings can take, nor senates give away; which we may justly assert whenever and by whomsoever it is attacked; and which, if ever it should happen to be lost, we may take the first opportunity to recover.

The natural consequence of these chimeras is contempt of authority, and an irreverence for any superiority but

what is founded upon merit; and their notions of merit are very peculiar, for it is among them no great proof of merit to be wealthy and powerful, to wear a garter or a star, to command a regiment or a senate, to have the ear of the minister or of the king, or to possess any of those virtues and excellencies, which, among us, entitle a man to little less than worship and prostration.

We may, therefore, easily conceive that Mr. Brooke thought himself entitled to be importunate for a license, because, in his own opinion, he deserved one, and to complain thus loudly at the repulse he met with.

His complaints will have, I hope, but little weight with the publick; since the opinions of the sect in which he is enlisted are exposed, and shown to be evidently and demonstrably opposite to that system of subordination and dependence, to which we are indebted for the present tranquillity of the nation, and that cheerfulness and readiness with which the two houses concur in all our designs.

I shall, however, to silence him entirely, or at least to show those of our party that he ought to be silent, consider singly every instance of hardship and oppression which he has dared to publish in the papers, and to publish in such a manner, that I hope no man will condemn me for want of candour in becoming an advocate for the ministry, if I can consider his advertisements as nothing less than AN APPEAL TO HIS COUNTRY.

Let me be forgiven if I cannot speak with temper of such insolence as this: is a man without title, pension, or place, to suspect the impartiality or the judgment of those who are entrusted with the administration of publick affairs? Is he, when the law is not strictly observed in regard to him, to think himself aggrieved, to tell his sentiments in print, assert his claim to better usage, and fly for redress to another tribunal?

If such practices are permitted, I will not venture to foretell the effects of them; the ministry may soon be convinced, that such sufferers will find compassion, and that

it is safer not to bear hard upon them, than to allow them to complain.

The power of licensing, in general, being firmly established by an act of parliament, our poet has not attempted to call in question, but contents himself with censuring the manner in which it has been executed; so that I am not now engaged to assert the licenser's authority, but to defend his conduct.

The poet seems to think himself aggrieved, because the licenser kept his tragedy in his hands one-and-twenty days, whereas the law allows him to detain it only fourteen.

Where will the insolence of the malecontents end? Or how are such unreasonable expectations possibly to be satisfied? Was it ever known that a man exalted into a high station, dismissed a suppliant in the time limited by law? Ought not Mr. Brooke to think himself happy that his play was not detained longer? If he had been kept a year in suspense, what redress could he have obtained? Let the poets remember, when they appear before the licenser, or his deputy, that they stand at the tribunal, from which there is no appeal permitted, and where nothing will so well become them as reverence and submission.

Mr. Brooke mentions, in his preface, his knowledge of the laws of his own country: had he extended his inquiries to the civil law, he could have found a full justification of the licenser's conduct, "Boni judicis est ampliare suam auctoritatem."

If then it be "the business of a good judge to enlarge his authority," was it not in the licenser the utmost clemency and forbearance, to extend fourteen days only to twenty-one?

I suppose this great man's inclination to perform, at least, this duty of a good judge, is not questioned by any, either of his friends or enemies. I may, therefore, venture to hope, that he will extend his power by proper degrees, and that I shall live to see a malecontent writer earnestly

soliciting for the copy of a play, which he had delivered to the licenser twenty years before.

"I waited," says he, "often on the licenser, and with the utmost importunity entreated an answer." Let Mr. Brooke consider, whether that importunity was not a sufficient reason for the disappointment. Let him reflect how much more decent it had been to have waited the leisure of a great man, than to have pressed upon him with repeated petitions, and to have intruded upon those precious moments which he has dedicated to the service of his country.

Mr. Brooke was, doubtless, led into this improper manner of acting, by an erroneous notion that the grant of a license was not an act of favour, but of justice; a mistake into which he could not have fallen, but from a supine inattention to the design of the statute, which was only to bring poets into subjection and dependence, not to encourage good writers, but to discourage all.

There lies no obligation upon the licenser to grant his sanction to a play, however excellent; nor can Mr. Brooke demand any reparation, whatever applause his performance may meet with.

Another grievance is, that the licenser assigned no reason for his refusal. This is a higher strain of insolence than any of the former. Is it for a poet to demand a licenser's reason for his proceedings? Is he not rather to acquiesce in the decision of authority, and conclude, that there are reasons which he cannot comprehend?

Unhappy would it be for men in power, were they always obliged to publish the motives of their conduct. What is power, but the liberty of acting without being accountable? The advocates for the licensing act have alleged, that the lord chamberlain has always had authority to prohibit the representation of a play for just reasons. Why then did we call in all our force to procure an act of parliament? Was it to enable him to do what he has always done? to confirm an authority which no man attempted to impair, or pretended to dispute?

No, certainly: our intention was to invest him with new privileges, and to empower him to do that without reason, which with reason he could do before.

We have found, by long experience, that to lie under a necessity of assigning reasons, is very troublesome, and that many an excellent design has miscarried by the loss of time spent unnecessarily in examining reasons.

Always to call for reasons, and always to reject them, shows a strange degree of perverseness; yet, such is the daily behaviour of our adversaries, who have never yet been satisfied with any reasons that have been offered by us.

They have made it their practice to demand, once a year, the reasons for which we maintain a standing army.

One year we told them that it was necessary, because all the nations round us were involved in war; this had no effect upon them, and, therefore, resolving to do our utmost for their satisfaction, we told them, the next year, that it was necessary, because all the nations round us were at peace.

This reason finding no better reception than the other, we had recourse to our apprehensions of an invasion from the Pretender, of an insurrection in favour of gin, and of a general disaffection among the people.

But as they continue still impenetrable, and oblige us still to assign our annual reasons, we shall spare no endeavour to procure such as may be more satisfactory than any of the former.

The reason we once gave for building barracks was, for fear of the plague; and we intend next year to propose the augmentation of our troops, for fear of a famine.

The committee, by which the act for licensing the stage was drawn up, had too long known the inconvenience of giving reasons, and were too well acquainted with the characters of great men, to lay the lord chamberlain, or his deputy, under any such tormenting obligation.

Yet, lest Mr. Brooke should imagine that a license was refused him without just reasons, I shall condescend to treat him with more regard than he can reasonably expect,

and point out such sentiments, as not only justly exposed him to that refusal, but would have provoked any ministry less merciful than the present, to have inflicted some heavier penalties upon him.

His prologue is filled with such insinuations, as no friend of our excellent government can read without indignation and abhorrence, and cannot but be owned to be a proper introduction to such scenes, as seem designed to kindle in the audience a flame of opposition, patriotism, publick spirit, and independency; that spirit which we have so long endeavoured to suppress, and which cannot be revived without the entire subversion of all our schemes.

The seditious poet, not content with making an open attack upon us, by declaring, in plain terms, that he looks upon freedom as the only source of publick happiness, and national security, has endeavoured with subtilty, equal to his malice, to make us suspicious of our firmest friends, to infect our consultations with distrust, and to ruin us by disuniting us.

This, indeed, will not be easily effected; an union founded upon interest, and cemented by dependence, is naturally lasting; but confederacies which owe their rise to virtue, or mere conformity of sentiments, are quickly dissolved, since no individual has any thing either to hope or fear for himself, and publick spirit is generally too weak to combat with private passions.

The poet has, however, attempted to weaken our combination by an artful and sly assertion, which, if suffered to remain unconfuted, may operate, by degrees, upon our minds, in the days of leisure and retirement, which are now approaching, and, perhaps, fill us with such surmises as may at least very much embarrass our affairs.

The law by which the Swedes justified their opposition to the encroachments of the king of Denmark, he not only calls

> Great Nature's law, the law within the breast,

but proceeds to tell us, that it is

> ——stamp'd by heaven upon th' unletter'd mind.

By which he evidently intends to insinuate a maxim, which is, I hope, as false as it is pernicious, that men are naturally fond of liberty till those unborn ideas and desires are effaced by literature.

The author, if he be not a man mewed up in his solitary study, and entirely unacquainted with the conduct of the present ministry, must know that we have hitherto acted upon different principles. We have always regarded letters as great obstructions to our scheme of subordination, and have, therefore, when we have heard of any man remarkably unlettered, carefully noted him down, as the most proper person for any employments of trust or honour, and considered him as a man, in whom we could safely repose our most important secrets.

From among the uneducated and unlettered, we have chosen not only our ambassadors and other negotiators, but even our journalists and pamphleteers; nor have we had any reason to change our measures, or to repent of the confidence which we have placed in ignorance.

Are we now, therefore, to be told, that this law is

——stamp'd upon th' unletter'd mind?

Are we to suspect our placemen, our pensioners, our generals, our lawyers, our best friends in both houses, all our adherents among the atheists and infidels, and our very gazetteers, clerks, and court-pages, as friends to independency? Doubtless this is the tendency of his assertion, but we have known them too long to be thus imposed upon; the unlettered have been our warmest and most constant defenders; nor have we omitted any thing to deserve their favour, but have always endeavoured to raise their reputation, extend their influence, and increase their number.

In his first act he abounds with sentiments very inconsistent with the ends for which the power of licensing was granted; to enumerate them all would be to transcribe a great part of his play, a task which I shall very willingly leave to others, who, though true friends to the government, are not inflamed with zeal so fiery and impatient as

mine, and, therefore, do not feel the same emotions of rage and resentment at the sight of those infamous passages, in which venality and dependence are represented, as mean in themselves, and productive of remorse and infelicity.

One line, which ought, in my opinion, to be erased from every copy, by a special act of parliament, is mentioned by Anderson, as pronounced by the hero in his sleep,

O Sweden! O my country! yet I'll save thee.

This line I have reason to believe thrown out as a kind of a watchword for the opposing faction, who, when they meet in their seditious assemblies, have been observed to lay their hands upon their breasts, and cry out, with great vehemence of accent,

O B——[b]! O my country! yet I'll save thee.

In the second scene he endeavours to fix epithets of contempt upon those passions and desires, which have been always found most useful to the ministry, and most opposite to the spirit of independency.

Base fear, the laziness of lust, gross appetites,
These are the ladders, and the grov'ling footstool
From whence the tyrant rises————
Secure and scepter'd in the soul's servility,
He has debauched the genius of our country,
And rides triumphant, while her captive sons
Await his nod, the silken slaves of pleasure,
Or fetter'd in their fears.————

Thus is that decent submission to our superiours, and that proper awe of authority which we are taught in courts, termed base fear and the servility of the soul. Thus are those gaieties and enjoyments, those elegant amusements and lulling pleasures, which the followers of a court are blessed with, as the just rewards of their attendance and submission, degraded to lust, grossness, and debauchery. The author ought to be told, that courts are not to be mentioned with so little ceremony, and that though gallantries and amours are admitted there, it is almost treason to suppose them infected with debauchery or lust.

[b] Britain

It is observable, that, when this hateful writer has conceived any thought of an uncommon malignity, a thought which tends, in a more particular manner, to excite the love of liberty, animate the heat of patriotism, or degrade the majesty of kings, he takes care to put it in the mouth of his hero, that it may be more forcibly impressed upon his reader. Thus Gustavus, speaking of his tatters, cries out,

> ——————Yes, my Arvida,
> Beyond the sweeping of the proudest train
> That shades a monareh's heel, I prize these weeds;
> For they are sacred to my country's freedom.

Here this abandoned son of liberty makes a full discovery of his execrable principles, the tatters of Gustavus, the usual dress of the assertors of these doctrines, are of more divinity, because they are sacred to freedom, than the sumptuous and magnificent robes of regality itself. Such sentiments are truly detestable, nor could any thing be an aggravation of the author's guilt, except his ludicrous manner of mentioning a monarch.

The heel of a monarch, or even the print of his heel, is a thing too venerable and sacred to be treated with such levity, and placed in contrast with rags and poverty. He, that will speak contemptuously of the heel of a monarch, will, whenever he can with security, speak contemptuously of his head.

These are the most glaring passages which have occurred, in the perusal of the first pages; my indignation will not suffer me to proceed farther, and I think much better of the licenser, than to believe he went so far.

In the few remarks which I have set down, the reader will easily observe, that I have strained no expression beyond its natural import, and have divested myself of all heat, partiality, and prejudice.

So far, therefore, is Mr. Brooke from having received any hard or unwarrantable treatment, that the licenser has only acted in pursuance of that law to which he owes his power; a law, which every admirer of the administration

must own to be very necessary, and to have produced very salutary effects.

I am, indeed, surprised that this great office is not drawn out into a longer series of deputations; since it might afford a gainful and reputable employment to a great number of the friends of the government; and, I should think, instead of having immediate recourse to the deputy-licenser himself, it might be sufficient honour for any poet, except the laureate, to stand bareheaded in the presence of the deputy of the deputy's deputy in the nineteenth subordination.

Such a number cannot but be thought necessary, if we take into consideration the great work of drawing up an index expurgatorius to all the old plays; which is, I hope, already undertaken, or, if it has been hitherto unhappily neglected, I take this opportunity to recommend.

The productions of our old poets are crowded with passages very unfit for the ears of an English audience, and which cannot be pronounced without irritating the minds of the people.

This censure I do not confine to those lines in which liberty, natural equality, wicked ministers, deluded kings, mean arts of negotiation, venal senates, mercenary troops, oppressive officers, servile and exorbitant taxes, universal corruption, the luxuries of a court, the miseries of the people, the decline of trade, or the happiness of independency, are directly mentioned. These are such glaring passages, as cannot be suffered to pass without the most supine and criminal negligence. I hope the vigilance of the licensers will extend to all such speeches and soliloquies as tend to recommend the pleasures of virtue, the tranquillity of an uncorrupted head, and the satisfactions of conscious innocence; for though such strokes as these do not appear to a common eye to threaten any danger to the government, yet it is well known to more penetrating observers, that they have such consequences as cannot be too diligently obviated, or too cautiously avoided.

A man, who becomes once enamoured of the charms of

virtue, is apt to be very little concerned about the acquisition of wealth or titles, and is, therefore, not easily induced to act in a manner contrary to his real sentiments, or to vote at the word of command; by contracting his desires, and regulating his appetites, he wants much less than other men; and every one versed in the arts of government can tell, that men are more easily influenced, in proportion as they are more necessitous.

This is not the only reason why virtue should not receive too much countenance from a licensed stage; her admirers and followers are not only naturally independent, but learn such an uniform and consistent manner of speaking and acting, that they frequently, by the mere force of artless honesty, surmount all the obstacles which subtilty and politicks can throw in their way, and obtain their ends, in spite of the most profound and sagacious ministry.

Such, then, are the passages to be expunged by the licensers: in many parts, indeed, the speeches will be imperfect, and the action appear not regularly conducted, but the poet laureate may easily supply these vacuities, by inserting some of his own verses in praise of wealth, luxury, and venality.

But alas! all those pernicious sentiments which we shall banish from the stage, will be vented from the press, and more studiously read, because they are prohibited.

I cannot but earnestly implore the friends of the government to leave no art untried, by which we may hope to succeed in our design of extending the power of the licenser to the press, and of making it criminal to publish any thing without an IMPRIMATUR.

How much would this single law lighten the mighty burden of state affairs! With how much security might our ministers enjoy their honours, their places, their reputations, and their admirers, could they once suppress those malicious invectives which are, at present, so industriously propagated, and so eagerly read; could they hinder any arguments but their own from coming to the ears of the people, and stop effectually the voice of cavil and inquiry!

I cannot but indulge myself a little while, by dwelling on this pleasing scene, and imagining those halcyon days, in which no politicks shall be read but those of the Gazetteer, nor any poetry but that of the laureate; when we shall hear of nothing but the successful negotiations of our ministers, and the great actions of ——

How much happier would this state be, than those perpetual jealousies and contentions which are inseparable from knowledge and liberty, and which have, for many years, kept this nation in perpetual commotions!

But these are times, rather to be wished for than expected, for such is the nature of our unquiet countrymen, that, if they are not admitted to the knowledge of affairs, they are always suspecting their governours of designs prejudicial to their interest; they have not the least notion of the pleasing tranquillity of ignorance, nor can be brought to imagine, that they are kept in the dark, lest too much light should hurt their eyes. They have long claimed a right of directing their superiours, and are exasperated at the least mention of secrets of state.

This temper makes them very readily encourage any writer or printer, who, at the hazard of his life or fortune, will give them any information: and, while this humour prevails, there never will be wanting some daring adventurer who will write in defence of liberty, and some zealous or avaricious printer who will disperse his papers.

It has never yet been found that any power, however vigilant or despotick, has been able to prevent the publication of seditious journals, ballads, essays, and dissertations; "Considerations on the present state of affairs," and "Enquiries into the conduct of the administration[c]."

Yet I must confess, that, considering the success with which the present ministry has hitherto proceeded in their attempts to drive out of the world the old prejudices of patriotism and publick spirit, I cannot but entertain some

[c] Titles of pamphlets published at this juncture. The former by lord Lyttelton. See his works, vol i.

hopes, that what has been so often attempted by their predecessors, is reserved to be accomplished by their superiour abilities.

If I might presume to advise them upon this great affair, I should dissuade them from any direct attempt upon the liberty of the press, which is the darling of the common people, and, therefore, cannot be attacked without immediate danger. They may proceed by a more sure and silent way, and attain the desired end without noise, detraction, or oppression.

There are scattered over this kingdom several little seminaries, in which the lower ranks of people, and the youngest sons of our nobility and gentry are taught, from their earliest infancy, the pernicious arts of spelling and reading, which they afterwards continue to practise, very much to the disturbance of their own quiet, and the interruption of ministerial measures.

These seminaries may, by an act of parliament, be, at once, suppressed; and that our posterity be deprived of all means of reviving this corrupt method of education, it may be made felony to teach to read without a license from the lord chamberlain.

This expedient, which I hope will be carefully concealed from the vulgar, must infallibly answer the great end proposed by it, and set the power of the court not only above the insults of the poets, but, in a short time, above the necessity of providing against them. The licenser, having his authority thus extended, will, in time, enjoy the title and the salary without the trouble of exercising his power, and the nation will rest, at length, in ignorance and peace.

PREFACE TO THE GENTLEMAN'S MAGAZINE, 1738.

THE usual design of addresses of this sort is to implore the candour of the publick: we have always had the more pleasing province of returning thanks, and making our acknowledgments for the kind acceptance which our monthly collections have met with.

This, it seems, did not sufficiently appear from the numerous sale and repeated impressions of our books, which have, at once, exceeded our merit and our expectation; but have been still more plainly attested by the clamours, rage, and calumnies of our competitors, of whom we have seldom taken any notice, not only because it is cruelty to insult the depressed, and folly to engage with desperation, but because we consider all their outcries, menaces, and boasts, as nothing more than advertisements in our favour, being evidently drawn up with the bitterness of baffled malice and disappointed hope; and almost discovering, in plain terms, that the unhappy authors have seventy thousand London Magazines mouldering in their warehouses, returned from all parts of the kingdom, unsold, unread, and disregarded.

Our obligations for the encouragement we have so long continued to receive, are so much the greater, as no artifices have been omitted to supplant us. Our adversaries cannot be denied the praise of industry; how far they can be celebrated for an honest industry, we leave to the decision of the publick, and even of their brethren, the booksellers, not including those whose advertisements they obliterated to paste their invectives in our book.

The success of the Gentleman's Magazine has given rise to almost twenty imitations of it, which are either all dead, or very little regarded by the world. Before we had published sixteen months, we met with such a general

approbation, that a knot of enterprising geniuses, and sagacious inventors, assembled from all parts of the town, agreed, with an unanimity natural to understandings of the same size, to seize upon our whole plan, without changing even the title. Some weak objections were, indeed, made by one of them against the design, as having an air of servility, dishonesty, and piracy; but it was concluded that all these imputations might be avoided by giving the picture of St. Paul's instead of St. John's gate; it was, however, thought indispensably necessary to add, printed in St. John's street, though there was then no printing-house in that place.

That these plagiaries should, after having thus stolen their whole design from us, charge us with robbery, on any occasion, is a degree of impudence scarcely to be matched, and certainly entitles them to the first rank among false heroes. We have, therefore, inserted their names[d], at length, in our February magazine, p. 61; being desirous that every man should enjoy the reputation he deserves.

Another attack has been made upon us by the author of Common Sense, an adversary equally malicious as the former, and equally despicable. What were his views, or what his provocations, we know not, nor have thought him considerable enough to inquire. To make him any further answer would be to descend too low; but, as he is one of those happy writers, who are best exposed by quoting their own words, we have given his elegant remarks in our magazine for December, where the reader may entertain himself, at his leisure, with an agreeable mixture of scurrility and false grammar.

For the future, we shall rarely offend him by adopting any of his performances, being unwilling to prolong the life of such pieces as deserve no other fate than to be hissed, torn, and forgotten. However, that the curiosity

[d] The names are thus inserted—"The *gay* and *learned* C. Ackers, of Swan-alley, printer; the *polite* and *generous* T. Cox, under the Royal Exchange; the *eloquent* and *courtly* J. Clark, of Duck-lane; and the *modest, civil,* and *judicious* T. Astley, of St. Paul's Church-yard, booksellers."—All these names appeared in the title of the London Magazine, begun in 1732.

of our readers may not be disappointed, we shall, whenever we find him a little excelling himself, perhaps print his dissertations upon our blue covers, that they may be looked over, and stripped off, without disgracing our collection, or swelling our volumes.

We are sorry that, by inserting some of his essays, we have filled the head of this petty writer with idle chimeras of applause, laurels and immortality, nor suspected the bad effect of our regard for him, till we saw, in the postscript to one of his papers, a wild[e] prediction of the honours to be paid him by future ages. Should any mention of him be made, or his writings, by posterity, it will, probably, be in words like these: "In the Gentleman's Magazine are still preserved some essays, under the specious and inviting title of Common Sense. How papers of so little value came to be rescued from the common lot of dulness, we are, at this distance of time, unable to conceive, but imagine, that personal friendship prevailed with Urban to admit them in opposition to his judgment. If this was the reason, he met afterwards with the treatment which all deserve who patronise stupidity; for the writer, instead of acknowledging his favours, complains of injustice, robbery, and mutilation; but complains in a style so barbarous and indecent, as sufficiently confutes his own calumnies."

In this manner must this author expect to be mentioned. But of him, and our other adversaries, we beg the reader's pardon for having said so much. We hope it will be remembered, in our favour, that it is sometimes necessary to chastise insolence, and that there is a sort of men who cannot distinguish between forbearance, and cowardice.

[e] Common Sense Journal, printed by Purser of Whitefriars, March 11, 1738. "I make no doubt but after some grave historian, three or four hundred years hence, has described the corruption, the baseness, and the flattery which men run into in these times, he will make the following observation:—In the year 1737, a certain unknown author published a writing under the title of Common Sense; this writing came out weekly, in little detached essays, some of which are political, some moral, and others humorous. By the best judgment that can be formed of a work, the style and language of which is become so obsolete that it is scarce intelligible, it answers the title well," &c.

AN APPEAL TO THE PUBLICK.

From the Gentleman's Magazine, March, 1739.

Men' moveat cimex Pantilius? aut crucier, quod
Vellicet absentem Demetrius——— HOR.

Laudat, amat, cantat nostros mea Roma libellos,
Meque sinus omnes, me manus omnis habet.
Ecce rubet quidam, pallet, stupet, oscitat, odit.
Hoc volo, nunc nobis carmina nostra placent. MARTIAL.

IT is plain from the conduct of writers of the first class, that they have esteemed it no derogation from their characters to defend themselves against the censures of ignorance, or the calumnies of envy.

It is not reasonable to suppose, that they always judged their adversaries worthy of a formal confutation; but they concluded it not prudent to neglect the feeblest attacks; they knew that such men have often done hurt, who had not abilities to do good; that the weakest hand, if not timely disarmed, may stab a hero in his sleep; that a worm, however small, may destroy a fleet in the acorn; and that citadels, which have defied armies, have been blown up by rats.

In imitation of these great examples, we think it not absolutely needless to vindicate ourselves from the virulent aspersions of the Craftsman and Common Sense; because their accusations, though entirely groundless, and without the least proof, are urged with an air of confidence, which the unwary may mistake for consciousness of truth.

In order to set the proceedings of these calumniators in a proper light, it is necessary to inform such of our readers, as are unacquainted with the artifices of trade, that we originally incurred the displeasure of the greatest part of the booksellers by keeping this magazine wholly in our own hands, without admitting any of that fraternity into a share of the property. For nothing is more criminal, in

the opinion of many of them, than for an author to enjoy more advantage from his own works than they are disposed to allow him. This is a principle so well established among them, that we can produce some who threatened printers with their highest displeasure, for their having dared to print books for those that wrote them.

Hinc iræ, hinc odia.

This was the first ground of their animosity, which, for some time, proceeded no farther than private murmurs and petty discouragements. At length, determining to be no longer debarred from a share in so beneficial a project, a knot of them combined to seize our whole plan; and, without the least attempt to vary or improve it, began, with the utmost vigour to print and circulate the London Magazine, with such success, that in a few years, while we were printing the fifth edition of some of our earliest numbers, they had seventy thousand of their books returned, unsold, upon their hands.

It was then time to exert their utmost efforts to stop our progress, and nothing was to be left unattempted that interest could suggest. It will be easily imagined, that their influence, among those of their own trade, was greater than ours, and that their collections were, therefore, more industriously propagated by their brethren; but this, being the natural consequence of such a relation, and, therefore, excusable, is only mentioned to show the disadvantages against which we are obliged to struggle, and, to convince the reader, that we who depend so entirely upon his approbation, shall omit nothing to deserve it.

They then had recourse to advertisements, in which they, sometimes, made faint attempts to be witty, and, sometimes, were content with being merely scurrilous; but, finding that their attacks, while we had an opportunity of returning hostilities, generally procured them such treatment as very little contributed to their reputation, they came, at last, to a resolution of excluding us from the newspapers in which they have any influence: by this

means they can, at present, insult us with impunity, and without the least danger of confutation.

Their last, and, indeed, their most artful expedient, has been to hire and incite the weekly journalists against us. The first weak attempt was made by the Universal Spectator; but this we took not the least notice of, as we did not imagine it would ever come to the knowledge of the publick.

Whether there was then a confederacy between this journal and Common Sense's, as at present, between Common Sense and the Craftsman; or whether understandings of the same form receive, at certain times, the same impressions from the planets, I know not; but about that time war was, likewise, declared against us by the redoubted author of Common Sense; an adversary not so much to be dreaded for his abilities, as for the title of his paper, behind which he has the art of sheltering himself in perfect security. He defeats all his enemies by calling them "enemies to common sense," and silences the strongest objections and the clearest reasonings by assuring his readers that, "they are contrary to common sense."

I must confess, to the immortal honour of this great writer, that I can remember but two instances of a genius able to use a few syllables to such great and so various purposes. One is, the old man in Shadwell, who seems, by long time and experience, to have attained to equal perfection with our author; for, "when a young fellow began to prate and be pert," says he, "I silenced him with my old word, Tace is Latin for a candle."

The other, who seems yet more to resemble this writer, was one Goodman, a horsestealer, who being asked, after having been found guilty by the jury, what he had to offer to prevent sentence of death from being passed upon him, did not attempt to extenuate his crime, but entreated the judge to beware of hanging a *Good man*.

This writer we thought, however injudiciously, worthy, not indeed of a reply, but of some correction, and in our magazine for December, 1738, and the preface to the

supplement, treated him in such a manner as he does not seem inclined to forget.

From that time, losing all patience, he has exhausted his stores of scurrility upon us; but our readers will find, upon consulting the passages above mentioned, that he has received too much provocation to be admitted as an impartial critick.

In our magazine of January, p. 24, we made a remark upon the Craftsman, and in p. 3, dropped some general observations upon the weekly writers, by which we did not expect to make them more our friends. Nor, indeed, did we imagine that this would have inflamed Caleb to so high a degree. His resentment has risen so much above the provocation, that we cannot but impute it more to what he fears than what he has felt. He has seen the solecisms of his brother, Common Sense, exposed, and remembers that,

——tua res agitur, paries cum proximus ardet.

He imagines, that he shall soon fall under the same censure, and is willing that our criticisms shall appear rather the effects of our resentment than our judgment.

For this reason, I suppose, (for I can find no other,) he has joined with Common Sense to charge us with partiality, and to recommend the London Magazine, as drawn up with less regard to interest or party. A favour, which the authors of that collection have endeavoured to deserve from them by the most servile adulation.

But, as we have a higher opinion of the candour of our readers, than to believe that they will condemn us without examination, or give up their right of judging for themselves, we are not unconcerned at this charge, though the most atrocious and malignant that can be brought against us. We entreat only to be compared with our rivals, in full confidence, that not only our innocence, but our superiority will appear[f].

[f] These prefaces are written with that warmth of zeal which characterizes all Johnson's efforts in behalf of his friends. He ever retained a grateful sense of the kindness shown to him by Cave, his earliest patron; and, when engaged

LETTER ON FIREWORKS[g].

MR. URBAN,

AMONG the principal topicks of conversation which now furnish the places of assembly with amusement, may be justly numbered the fireworks, which are advancing, by such slow degrees, and with such costly preparation.

The first reflection, that naturally arises, is upon the inequality of the effect to the cause. Here are vast sums expended, many hands, and some heads, employed, from day to day, and from month to month; and the whole nation is filled with expectations, by delineations and narratives. And in what is all this to end? in a building, that is to attract the admiration of ages? in a bridge, which may facilitate the commerce of future generations? in a work of any kind, which may stand as the model of beauty, or the pattern of virtue? To show the blessings of the late change of our state[h] by any monument of these kinds, were a project worthy not only of wealth, and power, and greatness, but of learning, wisdom, and virtue. But nothing of this kind is designed; nothing more is projected, than a crowd, a shout, and a blaze: the mighty work of artifice and contrivance is to be set on fire for no other

in his undertakings, he regarded Cave's enemies or opposers as his own. We can only thus vindicate his contemptuous references to the UNIVERSAL SPECTATOR, which, though far inferior to that great work whose name it bears, is very respectable; nor, on any other consideration, can we account for his derision of COMMON SENSE, a periodical, enriched by the contributions of lord Chesterfield and lord Lyttelton; or of the CRAFTSMAN, which was conducted by Amhurst, the able associate of Bolingbroke and Pulteney. Neither can we, without thus considering his relative situation, acquit Johnson of inconsistency in his strictures, who, in 1756, himself undertook the editorship of the LITERARY MAGAZINE, a work which might be viewed as the most formidable rival of the GENTLEMAN'S MAGAZINE. The full details of his connexion with this now venerable publication are given in the preface to the index of that work, published by Mr. Nichols.—ED.

[g] Inserted in the Gentleman's Magazine, Jan. 1749.

[h] The peace of Aix la Chapelle, 1748.

purpose that I can see, than to show how idle pyrotechnical virtuosos have been busy. Four hours the sun will shine, and then fall from his orb, and lose his memory and his lustre together; the spectators will disperse, as their inclinations lead them, and wonder by what strange infatuation they had been drawn together. In this will consist the only propriety of this transient show, that it will resemble the war of which it celebrates the period. The powers of this part of the world, after long preparations, deep intrigues, and subtle schemes, have set Europe in a flame, and, after having gazed awhile at their fireworks, have laid themselves down where they rose, to inquire for what they have been contending.

It is remarked, likewise, that this blaze, so transitory and so useless, will be to be paid for, when it shines no longer: and many cannot forbear observing, how many lasting advantages might be purchased, how many acres might be drained, how many ways repaired, how many debtors might be released, how many widows and orphans, whom the war has ruined, might be relieved, by the expense which is now about to evaporate in smoke, and to be scattered in rockets: and there are some who think not only reason, but humanity offended, by such a trifling profusion, when so many sailors are starving, and so many churches sinking into ruins.

It is no improper inquiry, by whom this expense is at last to be borne; for certainly, nothing can be more unreasonable than to tax the nation for a blaze, which will be extinguished before many of them know it has been lighted; nor will it be consistent with the common practice, which directs, that local advantages shall be procured at the expense of the district that enjoys them. I never found, in any records, that any town petitioned the parliament for a may-pole, a bull-ring, or a skittle-ground; and, therefore, I should think, fireworks, as they are less durable, and less useful, have, at least, as little claim to the publick purse.

The fireworks are, I suppose, prepared, and, therefore,

it is too late to obviate the project; but I hope the generosity of the great is not so far extinguished, as that they can, for their diversion, drain a nation already exhausted, and make us pay for pictures in the fire, which none will have the poor pleasure of beholding but themselves.

PROPOSALS FOR PRINTING, BY SUBSCRIPTION,

ESSAYS IN VERSE AND PROSE.

BY ANNA WILLIAMS[1].

WHEN a writer of my sex solicits the regard of the publick, some apology seems always to be expected; and it is, unhappily, too much in my power to satisfy this demand; since, how little soever I may be qualified, either by nature or study, for furnishing the world with literary entertainments, I have such motives for venturing my little performances into the light, as are sufficient to counterbalance the censure of arrogance, and to turn off my attention from the threats of criticism. The world will, perhaps, be something softened, when it shall be known, that my intention was to have lived by means more suited to my ability, from which being now cut off by a total privation of sight, I have been persuaded to suffer such essays, as I had formerly written, to be collected and fitted, if they can be fitted, by the kindness of my friends, for the press. The candour of those that have already encouraged me, will, I hope, pardon the delays incident to a work which must be performed by other eyes and other hands; and censure may, surely, be content to spare the compositions of a woman, written for amusement, and published for necessity.

[1] From the Gentleman's Magazine, Sept. 1750.

A PROJECT

FOR THE EMPLOYMENT OF AUTHORS*.

TO THE VISITER.

SIR,

I KNOW not what apology to make for the little dissertation which I have sent, and which I will not deny that I have sent with design that you should print it. I know that admonition is very seldom grateful, and that authors are eminently cholerick; yet, I hope, that you, and every impartial reader, will be convinced, that I intend the benefit of the publick, and the advancement of knowledge; and that every reader, into whose hands this shall happen to fall, will rank himself among those who are to be excepted from general censure.

I am, Sir, your humble servant.

Scire velim quare toties mihi, Nævole, tristis
Occurras, fronte obducta, ceu Marsya victus. Juv.

There is no gift of nature, or effect of art, however beneficial to mankind, which, either by casual deviations, or foolish perversions, is not sometimes mischievous. Whatever may be the cause of happiness, may be made, likewise, the cause of misery. The medicine, which, rightly applied, has power to cure, has, when rashness or ignorance prescribes it, the same power to destroy.

I have computed, at some hours of leisure, the loss and gain of literature, and set the pain which it produces against the pleasure. Such calculations are, indeed, at a great distance from mathematical exactness, as they arise from the induction of a few particulars, and from observations made rather according to the temper of the computist, than the nature of things. But such a narrow survey as can be taken, will easily show that letters cause

* From the Universal Visiter, April, 1756.

many blessings, and inflict many calamities; that there is scarcely an individual who may not consider them as immediately or mediately influencing his life, as they are chief instruments of conveying knowledge, and transmitting sentiments; and almost every man learns, by their means, all that is right or wrong in his sentiments and conduct.

If letters were considered only as means of pleasure, it might well be doubted, in what degree of estimation they should be held; but when they are referred to necessity, the controversy is at an end; it soon appears, that though they may sometimes incommode us, yet human life would scarcely rise, without them, above the common existence of animal nature; we might, indeed, breathe and eat in universal ignorance, but must want all that gives pleasure or security, all the embellishments and delights, and most of the conveniencies, and comforts of our present condition.

Literature is a kind of intellectual light, which, like the light of the sun, may sometimes enable us to see what we do not like; but who would wish to escape unpleasing objects, by condemning himself to perpetual darkness?

Since, therefore, letters are thus indispensably necessary; since we cannot persuade ourselves to lose their benefits, for the sake of escaping their mischiefs, it is worth our serious inquiry, how their benefits may be increased, and their mischiefs lessened; by what means the harvest of our studies may afford us more corn and less chaff; and how the roses of the gardens of science may gratify us more with their fragrance, and prick us less with their thorns.

I shall not, at present, mention the more formidable evils which the misapplication of literature produces, nor speak of churches infected with heresy, states inflamed with sedition, or schools infatuated with hypothetical fictions. These are evils which mankind have always lamented, and which, till mankind grow wise and modest, they must, I am afraid, continue to lament, without hope of remedy. I shall now touch only on some lighter and less extensive evils, yet such, as are sufficiently heavy to

those that feel them, and are, of late, so widely diffused, as to deserve, though, perhaps, not the notice of the legislature, yet the consideration of those whose benevolence inclines them to a voluntary care of publick happiness.

It was long ago observed by Virgil, and, I suppose, by many before him, that "bees do not make honey for their own use;" the sweets which they collect in their laborious excursions, and store up in their hives with so much skill, are seized by those who have contributed neither toil nor art to the collection; and the poor animal is either destroyed by the invader, or left to shift without a supply. The condition is nearly the same of the gatherer of honey, and the gatherer of knowledge. The bee and the author work alike for others, and often lose the profit of their labour. The case, therefore, of authors, however hitherto neglected, may claim regard. Every body of men is important, according to the joint proportion of their usefulness and their number. Individuals, however they may excel, cannot hope to be considered, singly, as of great weight in the political balance; and multitudes, though they may, merely by their bulk, demand some notice, are yet not of much value, unless they contribute to ease the burden of society, by cooperating to its prosperity.

Of the men, whose condition we are now examining, the usefulness never was disputed; they are known to be the great disseminators of knowledge, and guardians of the commonwealth; and, of late, their number has been so much increased, that they are become a very conspicuous part of the nation. It is not now, as in former times, when men studied long, and passed through the severities of discipline, and the probation of publick trials, before they presumed to think themselves qualified for instructers of their countrymen; there is found a nearer way to fame and erudition, and the inclosures of literature are thrown open to every man whom idleness disposes to loiter, or whom pride inclines to set himself to view. The sailor publishes his journal, the farmer writes the process of his annual labour; he that succeeds in his trade, thinks his wealth a proof of

his understanding, and boldly tutors the publick; he that fails, considers his miscarriage as the consequence of a capacity too great for the business of a shop, and amuses himself in the Fleet with writing or translating. The last century imagined, that a man, composing in his chariot, was a new object of curiosity; but how much would the wonder have been increased by a footman studying behind it[1]! There is now no class of men without its authors, from the peer to the thrasher; nor can the sons of literature be confined any longer to Grub street or Moorfields; they are spread over all the town, and all the country, and fill every stage of habitation, from the cellar to the garret.

It is well known, that the price of commodities must always fall, as the quantity is increased, and that no trade can allow its professors to be multiplied beyond a certain number. The great misery of writers proceeds from their multitude. We easily perceive, that in a nation of clothiers, no man could have any cloth to make but for his own back; that in a community of bakers every man must use his own bread; and what can be the case of a nation of authors, but that every man must be content to read his book to himself? For, surely, it is vain to hope, that of men labouring at the same occupation, any will prefer the work of his neighbour to his own; yet this expectation, wild as it is, seems to be indulged by many of the writing race, and, therefore, it can be no wonder, that like all other men, who suffer their minds to form inconsiderate hopes, they are harassed and dejected with frequent disappointments.

If I were to form an adage of misery, or fix the lowest point to which humanity could fall, I should be tempted to name the life of an author. Many universal comparisons there are by which misery is expressed. We talk of a man teased like a bear at the stake, tormented like a toad under a harrow, or hunted like a dog with a stick at his tail; all these are, indeed, states of uneasiness, but what are they to the life of an author; of an author worried by cri-

[1] Dodsley's Muse in Livery was composed under these circumstances. Boswell's Life, ii.

ticks, tormented by his bookseller, and hunted by his creditors! Yet such must be the case of many among the retailers of knowledge, while they continue thus to swarm over the land; and, whether it be by propagation or contagion, produce new writers to heighten the general distress, to increase confusion, and hasten famine.

Having long studied the varieties of life, I can guess by every man's walk, or air, to what state of the community he belongs. Every man has noted the legs of a tailor, and the gait of a seaman; and a little extension of his physiognomical acquisitions will teach him to distinguish the countenance of an author. It is my practice, when I am in want of amusement, to place myself for an hour at Temple-bar, or any other narrow pass much frequented, and examine, one by one, the looks of the passengers; and I have commonly found, that, between the hours of eleven and four, every sixth man is an author. They are seldom to be seen very early in the morning, or late in the evening, but about dinner time they are all in motion, and have one uniform eagerness in their faces, which gives little opportunity of discerning their hopes or fears, their pleasures or their pains.

But, in the afternoon, when they have all dined, or composed themselves to pass the day without a dinner, their passions have full play, and I can perceive one man wondering at the stupidity of the publick, by which his new book has been totally neglected; another cursing the French who fright away literary curiosity by their threats of an invasion; another swearing at his bookseller, who will advance no money without copy; another perusing, as he walks, his publisher's bill; another murmuring at an unanswerable criticism; another determining to write no more to a generation of barbarians; and another resolving to try, once again, whether he cannot awaken the drowsy world to a sense of his merit.

It sometimes happens, that there may be remarked among them a smile of complacence, or a strut of elevation; but, if these favourites of fortune are carefully

watched for a few days, they seldom fail to show the transitoriness of human felicity; the crest falls, the gaiety is ended, and there appear evident tokens of a successful rival, or a fickle patron.

But of all authors, those are the most wretched, who exhibit their productions on the theatre, and who are to propitiate first the manager, and then the publick. Many an humble visitant have I followed to the doors of these lords of the drama, seen him touch the knocker with a shaking hand, and, after long deliberation, adventure to solicit entrance by a single knock; but I never staid to see them come out from their audience, because my heart is tender, and being subject to frights in bed, I would not willingly dream of an author.

That the number of authors is disproportionate to the maintenance, which the publick seems willing to assign them; that there is neither praise nor meat for all who write, is apparent from this; that, like wolves in long winters, they are forced to prey on one another. The reviewers and critical reviewers, the remarkers and examiners, can satisfy their hunger only by devouring their brethren. I am far from imagining that they are naturally more ravenous or blood-thirsty than those on whom they fall with so much violence and fury; but they are hungry, and hunger must be satisfied; and these savages, when their bellies are full, will fawn on those whom they now bite.

The result of all these considerations amounts only to this, that the number of writers must at last be lessened, but by what method this great design can be accomplished, is not easily discovered. It was lately proposed, that every man who kept a dog should pay a certain tax, which, as the contriver of ways and means very judiciously observed, would either destroy the dogs, or bring in money. Perhaps, it might be proper to lay some such tax upon authors, only the payment must be lessened in proportion as the animal, upon which it is raised, is less necessary; for many a man that would pay for his dog, will

dismiss his dedicator. Perhaps, if every one who employed or harboured an author, was assessed a groat a year, it would sufficiently lessen the nuisance without destroying the species.

But no great alteration is to be attempted rashly. We must consider how the authors, which this tax shall exclude from their trade, are to be employed. The nets used in the herring-fishery can furnish work but for few, and not many can be employed as labourers at the foundation of the new bridge. There must, therefore, be some other scheme formed for their accommodation, which the present state of affairs may easily supply. It is well known, that great efforts have been lately made to man the fleet, and augment the army, and loud complaints are made of useful hands forced away from their families into the service of the crown. This offensive exertion of power may be easily avoided, by opening a few houses for the entertainment of discarded authors, who would enter into the service with great alacrity, as most of them are zealous friends of every present government; many of them are men of able bodies, and strong limbs, qualified, at least, as well for the musket as the pen; they are, perhaps, at present a little emaciated and enfeebled, but would soon recover their strength and flesh with good quarters and present pay.

There are some reasons for which they may seem particularly qualified for a military life. They are used to suffer want of every kind; they are accustomed to obey the word of command from their patrons and their booksellers; they have always passed a life of hazard and adventure, uncertain what may be their state on the next day; and, what is of yet more importance, they have long made their minds familiar to danger, by descriptions of bloody battles, daring undertakings, and wonderful escapes. They have their memories stored with all the stratagems of war, and have, over and over, practised, in their closets, the expedients of distress, the exultation of triumph, and the resignation of heroes sentenced to destruction.

Some, indeed, there are, who, by often changing sides in controversy, may give just suspicion of their fidelity, and whom I should think likely to desert for the pleasure of desertion, or for a farthing a month advanced in their pay. Of these men I know not what use can be made, for they can never be trusted, but with shackles on their legs. There are others whom long depression, under supercilious patrons, has so humbled and crushed, that they will never have steadiness to keep their ranks. But for these men there may be found fifes and drums, and they will be well enough pleased to inflame others to battle, if they are not obliged to fight themselves.

It is more difficult to know what can be done with the ladies of the pen, of whom this age has produced greater numbers than any former time. It is, indeed, common for women to follow the camp, but no prudent general will allow them in such numbers as the breed of authoresses would furnish. Authoresses are seldom famous for clean linen, therefore, they cannot make laundresses; they are rarely skilful at their needle, and cannot mend a soldier's shirt; they will make bad sutlers, being not much accustomed to eat. I must, therefore, propose, that they shall form a regiment of themselves, and garrison the town which is supposed to be in most danger of a French invasion. They will, probably, have no enemies to encounter; but, if they are once shut up together, they will soon disencumber the publick by tearing out the eyes of one another.

The great art of life is to play for much, and to stake little; which rule I have kept in view through this whole project; for, if our authors and authoresses defeat our enemies, we shall obtain all the usual advantages of victory; and, if they should be destroyed in war, we shall lose only those who had wearied the publick, and whom, whatever be their fate, nobody will miss.

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PREFACE TO THE LITERARY MAGAZINE, 1756.

TO THE PUBLICK.

THERE are some practices which custom and prejudice have so unhappily influenced, that to observe or neglect them is equally censurable. The promises made by the undertakers of any new design, every man thinks himself at liberty to deride, and yet every man expects, and expects with reason, that he who solicits the publick attention, should give some account of his pretensions.

We are about to exhibit to our countrymen a new monthly collection, to which the well-deserved popularity of the first undertaking of this kind, has now made it almost necessary to prefix the name of Magazine. There are, already, many such periodical compilations, of which we do not envy the reception, nor shall dispute the excellence. If the nature of things would allow us to indulge our wishes, we should desire to advance our own interest without lessening that of any other; and to excite the curiosity of the vacant, rather than withdraw that which other writers have already engaged.

Our design is to give the history, political and literary, of every month; and our pamphlets must consist, like other collections, of many articles unconnected and independent on each other.

The chief political object of an Englishman's attention must be the great council of the nation, and we shall, therefore, register all publick proceedings with particular care. We shall not attempt to give any regular series of debates, or to amuse our readers with senatorial rhetorick. The speeches inserted in other papers have been long known to be fictitious, and produced sometimes by men who never heard the debate, nor had any authentick information. We have no design to impose thus grossly on our readers, and shall, therefore, give the naked argu-

ments used in the discussion of every question, and add, when they can be obtained, the names of the speakers.

As the proceedings in parliament are unintelligible, without a knowledge of the facts to which they relate, and of the state of the nations to which they extend their influence, we shall exhibit monthly a view, though contracted, yet distinct, of foreign affairs, and lay open the designs and interests of those nations which are considered by the English either as friends or enemies.

Of transactions in our own country, curiosity will demand a more particular account, and we shall record every remarkable event, extraordinary casualty, uncommon performance, or striking novelty, and shall apply our care to the discovery of truth, with very little reliance on the daily historians.

The lists of births, marriages, deaths and burials, will be so drawn up that, we hope, very few omissions or mistakes will be found, though some must be expected to happen in so great a variety, where there is neither leisure nor opportunity for minute information.

It is intended that lists shall be given of all the officers and persons in publick employment; and that all the alterations shall be noted, as they happen, by which our list will be a kind of court-register, always complete.

The literary history necessarily contains an account of the labours of the learned, in which, whether we shall show much judgment or sagacity, must be left to our readers to determine; we can promise only justness and candour. It is not to be expected, that we can insert extensive extracts or critical examinations of all the writings, which this age of writers may offer to our notice. A few only will deserve the distinction of criticism, and a few only will obtain it. We shall try to select the best and most important pieces, and are not without hope, that we may sometimes influence the publick voice, and hasten the popularity of a valuable work.

Our regard will not be confined to books; it will extend to all the productions of science. Any new calculation, a

commodious instrument, the discovery of any property in nature, or any new method of bringing known properties into use or view, shall be diligently treasured up, wherever found.

In a paper designed for general perusal, it will be necessary to dwell most upon things of general entertainment. The elegant trifles of literature, the wild strains of fancy, the pleasing amusements of harmless wit, shall, therefore, be considered as necessary to our collection. Nor shall we omit researches into antiquity, explanation of coins or inscriptions, disquisitions on controverted history, conjectures on doubtful geography, or any other of those petty works upon which learned ingenuity is sometimes employed.

To these accounts of temporary transactions and fugitive performances, we shall add some dissertations on things more permanent and stable; some inquiries into the history of nature, which has hitherto been treated, as if mankind were afraid of exhausting it. There are, in our own country, many things and places worthy of note that are yet little known, and every day gives opportunities of new observations which are made and forgotten. We hope to find means of extending and perpetuating physiological discoveries; and with regard to this article, and all others, entreat the assistance of curious and candid correspondents.

We shall labour to attain as much exactness as can be expected in such variety, and shall give as much variety as can consist with reasonable exactness; for this purpose, a selection has been made of men qualified for the different parts of the work, and each has the employment assigned him, which he is supposed most able to discharge.

A DISSERTATION UPON THE GREEK COMEDY,

TRANSLATED FROM BRUMOY [m].

ADVERTISEMENT.

I CONCLUDE this work, according to my promise, with an account of the comick theatre, and entreat the reader, whether a favourer or an enemy of the ancient drama, not to pass his censure upon the authors or upon me, without a regular perusal of this whole work. For, though it seems to be composed of pieces of which each may precede or follow without dependence upon the other, yet all the parts, taken together, form a system which would be destroyed by their disjunction. Which way shall we come at the knowledge of the ancients' shows, but by comparing together all that is left of them? The value and necessity of this comparison determined me to publish all, or to publish nothing. Besides, the reflections on each piece, and on the general taste of antiquity, which, in my opinion, are not without importance, have a kind of obscure gradation, which I have carefully endeavoured to preserve, and of which the thread would be lost by him who should slightly glance sometimes upon one piece, and sometimes upon another. It is a structure which I have endeavoured to make as near to regularity as I could, and which must be seen in its full extent, and in proper succession. The reader who skips here and there over the book, might make a hundred objections which are either anticipated, or answered in those pieces which he might have overlooked. I have laid such stress upon the connexion of the parts of

[m] Published by Mrs. Lennox in 4to. 1759. To the third volume of this work the following advertisement is prefixed: "In this volume, the Discourse on the Greek Comedy, and the General Conclusion, are translated by the celebrated author of the Rambler. The Comedy of the Birds, and that of Peace, by a young Gentleman. The Comedy of the Frogs, by the learned and ingenious Dr. Gregory Sharpe. The Discourse upon the Cyclops, by John Bourrya, esq. The Cyclops, by Dr. Grainger, author of the translation of Tibullus."

this work, that I have declined to exhaust the subject, and have suppressed many of my notions, that I might leave the judicious reader to please himself by forming such conclusions as I supposed him like to discover, as well as myself. I am not here attempting to prejudice the reader by an apology either for the ancients, or my own manner. I have not claimed a right of obliging others to determine, by my opinion, the degrees of esteem which I think due to the authors of the Athenian stage; nor do I think that their reputation, in the present time, ought to depend upon my mode of thinking or expressing my thoughts, which I leave entirely to the judgment of the publick.

A DISSERTATION &c.

1. REASONS WHY ARISTOPHANES MAY BE REVIEWED, WITHOUT TRANSLATING HIM ENTIRELY.

I WAS in doubt a long time, whether I should meddle at all with the Greek comedy, both because the pieces which remain are very few, the licentiousness of Aristophanes, their author, is exorbitant; and it is very difficult to draw, from the performances of a single poet, a just idea of Greek comedy. Besides, it seemed that tragedy was sufficient to employ all my attention, that I might give a complete representation of that kind of writing, which was most esteemed by the Athenians and the wiser Greeks[n], particularly by Socrates, who set no value upon comedy or comick actors. But the very name of that drama, which in polite ages, and above all others in our own, has been so much advanced, that it has become equal to tragedy, if not preferable, inclines me to think that I may be partly reproached with an imperfect work, if, after having gone, as deep as I could, into the nature of Greek tragedy, I did not at least sketch a draught of the comedy.

[n] There was a law which forbade any judge of the Areopagus to write comedy.

I then considered, that it was not wholly impossible to surmount, at least in part, the difficulties which had stopped me, and to go somewhat farther than the learned writers [o], who have published, in French, some pieces of Aristophanes; not that I pretend to make large translations. The same reasons, which have hindered with respect to the more noble parts of the Greek drama, operate with double force upon my present subject. Though ridicule, which is the business of comedy, be not less uniform in all times, than the passions which are moved by tragick compositions; yet, if diversity of manners may sometimes disguise the passions themselves, how much greater change will be made in jocularities! The truth is, that they are so much changed by the course of time, that pleasantry and ridicule become dull and flat much more easily than the pathetick becomes ridiculous.

That which is commonly known by the term jocular and comick, is nothing but a turn of expression, an airy phantom, that must be caught at a particular point. As we lose this point, we lose the jocularity, and find nothing but dulness in its place. A lucky sally, which has filled a company with laughter, will have no effect in print, because it is shown single, and separate from the circumstance which gave it force. Many satirical jests, found in ancient books, have had the same fate; their spirit has evaporated by time, and have left nothing to us but insipidity. None but the most biting passages have preserved their points unblunted.

But, besides this objection, which extends universally to all translations of Aristophanes, and many allusions, of which time has deprived us, there are loose expressions thrown out to the populace, to raise laughter from corrupt passions, which are unworthy of the curiosity of decent readers, and which ought to rest eternally in proper obscurity. Not every thing, in this infancy of comedy, was excellent, at least, it would not appear excellent at this

[o] Madame Dacier, M. Boivin.

distance of time, in comparison of compositions of the same kind which lie before our eyes; and this is reason enough to save me the trouble of translating, and the reader that of perusing. As for that small number of writers, who delight in those delicacies, they give themselves very little trouble about translations, except it be to find fault with them; and the majority of people of wit like comedies that may give them pleasure, without much trouble of attention, and are not much disposed to find beauties in that which requires long deductions to find it beautiful. If Helen had not appeared beautiful to the Greeks and Trojans, but by force of argument, we had never been told of the Trojan war.

On the other side, Aristophanes is an author more considerable than one would imagine. The history of Greece could not pass over him, when it comes to touch upon the people of Athens; this, alone, might procure him respect, even when he was not considered as a comick poet. But, when his writings are taken into view, we find him the only author from whom may be drawn a just idea of the comedy of his age; and, farther, we find, in his pieces, that he often makes attacks upon the tragick writers, particularly upon the three chief, whose valuable remains we have had under examination; and, what is yet worse, fell sometimes upon the state, and upon the gods themselves.

2. THE CHIEF HEADS OF THIS DISCOURSE.

These considerations have determined me to follow, in my representation of this writer, the same method which I have taken in several tragick pieces, which is, that of giving an exact analysis, as far as the matter would allow, from which I deduce four important systems. First, upon the nature of the comedy of that age, without omitting that of Menander[p]. Secondly, upon the vices and go-

[p] Menander, an Athenian, son of Diopethes and Hegestrates, was, apparently, the most eminent of the writers of the new comedy. He had been a scholar of Theophrastus: his passion for the women brought infamy upon him: he was squinteyed, and very lively. Of the one hundred and eighty comedies, or,

vernment of the Athenians. Thirdly, upon the notion we ought to entertain of Aristophanes, with respect to Eschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides. Fourthly, upon the jest which he makes upon the gods. These things will not be treated in order, as a regular discourse seems to require, but will arise sometimes separately, sometimes together, from the view of each particular comedy, and from the reflections which this free manner of writing will allow. I shall conclude with a short view of the whole, and so finish my design.

4. HISTORY OF COMEDY.

I shall not repeat here what Madame Dacier, and so many others before her, have collected of all that can be known relating to the history of comedy. Its beginnings are as obscure as those of tragedy, and there is an appearance that we take these two words in a more extensive meaning: they had both the same original; that is, they began among the festivals of the vintage, and were not distinguished from one another, but by a burlesque or serious chorus, which made all the soul, and all the body. But, if we give these words a stricter sense, according to the notion which has since been formed, comedy was produced after tragedy, and was, in many respects, a sequel and imitation of the works of Eschylus. It is, in reality,

according to Suidas, the eighty which he composed, and which are all said to be translated by Terence, we have now only a few fragments remaining. He flourished about the 115th Olympiad, 318 years before the Christian æra. He was drowned as he was bathing in the port of Piræus. I have told, in another place, what is said of one Philemon, his antagonist, not so good a poet as himself, but one who often gained the prize. This Philemon was older than him, and was much in fashion in the time of Alexander the great. He expressed all his wishes in two lines: "To have health, and fortune, and pleasure, and never to be in debt, is all I desire." He was very covetous, and was pictured with his fingers hooked, so that he set his comedies at a high price. He lived about a hundred years, some say a hundred and one. Many tales are told of his death. Valerius Maximus says, that he died with laughing at a little incident: seeing an ass eating his figs, he ordered his servant to drive her away; the man made no great haste, and the ass eat them all:" "Well done," says Philemon, "now give her some wine."—Apuleius and Quintilian placed this writer much below Menander, but give him the second place.

nothing more than an action set before the sight, by the same artifice of representation. Nothing is different but the object, which is merely ridicule. This original of true comedy will be easily admitted, if we take the word of Horace, who must have known, better than us, the true dates of dramatick works. This poet supports the system, which I have endeavoured to establish in the second discourse[q], so strongly, as to amount to demonstrative proof.

Horace[r] expresses himself thus: "Thespis is said to have been the first inventor of a species of tragedy, in which he carried about, in carts, players smeared with the dregs of wine, of whom some sung and others declaimed." This was the first attempt, both of tragedy and comedy; for Thespis made use only of one speaker, without the least appearance of dialogue. "Eschylus, afterwards, exhibited them with more dignity. He placed them on a stage, somewhat above the ground, covered their faces with masks, put buskins on their feet, dressed them in trailing robes, and made them speak in a more lofty style." Horace omits invention of dialogue, which we learn from Aristotle[s]. But, however, it may be well enough inferred from the following words of Horace; this completion is mentioned while he speaks of Eschylus, and, therefore, to Eschylus it must be ascribed: "Then first appeared the old comedy, with great success in its beginning." Thus we see that the Greek comedy arose after tragedy, and, by consequence, tragedy was its parent, It was formed in imitation of Eschylus, the inventor of the tragick drama; or, to go yet higher into antiquity, had its original from Homer, who was the guide of Eschylus. For, if we credit Aristotle[t], comedy had its birth from the Margites, a satirical poem of Homer, and tragedy from the Iliad and Odyssey. Thus the design and artifice of comedy were drawn from Homer and Eschylus. This will appear less surprising, since the ideas of the human mind are always gradual, and arts are seldom invented but by imitation.

[q] Greek Theatre, part i. vol. i.
[r] Hor. Ar. Poet. v. 275.
[s] Poet. ch. 4.
[t] Ibid.

The first idea contains the seed of the second; this second, expanding itself, gives birth to a third; and so on. Such is the progress of the mind of man; it proceeds in its productions, step by step, in the same manner as nature multiplies her works by imitating, or repeating her own act, when she seems most to run into variety. In this manner it was that comedy had its birth, its increase, its improvement, its perfection, and its diversity.

But the question is, who was the happy author of that imitation, and that show, whether only one, like Eschylus of tragedy, or whether they were several? for neither Horace, nor any before him, explained this[u]. This poet only quotes three writers who had reputation in the old comedy, Eupolis[x], Cratinus[y], and Aristophanes; of whom he says, "That they, and others, who wrote in the same way, reprehended the faults of particular persons with excessive liberty." These are, probably, the poets of the greatest reputation, though they were not the first, and we

[u] "The alterations, which have been made in tragedy, were perceptible, and the authors of them known; but comedy has lain in obscurity, being not cultivated, like tragedy, from the time of its original; for it was long before the magistrates began to give comick choruses. It was first exhibited by actors, who played voluntarily, without orders of the magistrates. From the time that it began to take some settled form, we know its authors, but are not informed who first used masks, added prologues, increased the numbers of the actors, and joined all the other things which now belong to it. The first that thought of forming comick fables were Epicharmus and Phormys, and, consequently, this manner came from Sicily. Crates was the first Athenian that adopted it, and forsook the practice of gross raillery that prevailed before." Aristot. ch. 5. Crates flourished in the 82nd Olympiad, 450 years before our æra, twelve or thirteen years before Aristophanes.

[x] Eupolis was an Athenian; his death, which we shall mention presently, is represented differently by authors, who almost all agree that he was drowned. Elian adds an incident which deserves to be mentioned: he says (book x. Of Animals,) that one Augeas of Eleusis, made Eupolis a present of a fine mastiff, who was so faithful to his master as to worry to death a slave, who was carrying away some of his comedies. He adds, that, when the poet died at Egina, his dog staid by his tomb till he perished by grief and hunger.

[y] Cratinus of Athens, who was son of Callimedes, died at the age of ninety-seven. He composed twenty comedies, of which nine had the prize: he was a daring writer, but a cowardly warriour.

know the names of many others[a]. Among these three we may be sure that Aristophanes had the greatest character, since not only the king of Persia[a] expressed a high esteem of him to the Grecian ambassadours, as of a man extremely useful to his country, and Plato[b] rated him so high, as to say that the Graces resided in his bosom; but, likewise, because he is the only writer of whom any comedies have made their way down to us, through the confusion of times. There are not, indeed, any proofs that he was the inventor of comedy, properly so called, especially, since he had not only predecessors who wrote in the same kind, but it is, at least, a sign that he had contributed more than any other to bring comedy to the perfection in which he left it. We shall, therefore, not inquire farther, whether regular comedy was the work of a single mind, which seems yet to be unsettled, or of several contemporaries, such as these which Horace quotes. We must distinguish three forms which comedy wore, in consequence of the genius of the writers, or of the laws of the magistrates, and the change of the government of many into that of few.

5. THE OLD, MIDDLE, AND NEW COMEDY.

That comedy[c], which Horace calls the ancient, and which, according to his account, was after Eschylus, retained something of its original state, and of the licentiousness which it practised, while it was yet without regularity, and uttered loose jokes and abuse upon the passers-by from the cart of Thespis. Though it was now properly modelled, as might have been worthy of a great theatre, and a numerous audience, and deserved the name of a regular comedy, it was not yet much nearer to decency.

[a] Hertelius has collected the sentences of fifty Greek poets of the different ages of comedy.

[a] Interlude of the second act of the comedy intitled The Acharnians.

[b] Epigram attributed to Plato.

[c] This history of the three ages of comedy, and their different characters, is taken in part from the valuable fragments of Platonius.

It was a representation of real actions, and exhibited the dress, the motions, and the air, as far as could be done in a mask, of any one who was thought proper to be sacrificed to publick scorn. In a city so free, or, to say better, so licentious as Athens was, at that time, nobody was spared, not even the chief magistrate, nor the very judges, by whose voice comedies were allowed or prohibited. The insolence of those performances reached to open impiety, and sport was made equally with men and gods[d]. These are the features by which the greatest part of the compositions of Aristophanes will be known. In which, it may be particularly observed, that not the least appearance of praise will be found, and, therefore, certainly no trace of flattery or servility.

This licentiousness of the poets, to which, in some sort, Socrates fell a sacrifice, at last was restrained by a law. For the government, which was before shared by all the inhabitants, was now confined to a settled number of citizens. It was ordered that no man's name should be mentioned on the stage; but poetical malignity was not long in finding the secret of defeating the purpose of the law, and of making themselves ample compensation for the restraint laid upon authors, by the necessity of inventing false names. They set themselves to work upon known and real characters, so that they had now the advantage of giving a more exquisite gratification to the vanity of poets, and the malice of spectators. One had the refined pleasure of setting others to guess, and the other that of guessing right by naming the masks. When pictures are so like, that the name is not wanted, nobody inscribes it. The consequence of the law, therefore, was nothing more than to make that done with delicacy, which was done grossly before; and the art, which was expected would be confined within the limits of duty, was only partly transgressed with more ingenuity. Of this, Aristophanes, who was comprehended in this law, gives us good examples in

[d] It will be shown, how, and in what sense, this was allowed.

some of his poems. Such was that which was afterwards called the middle comedy.

The new comedy, or that which followed, was again an excellent refinement, prescribed by the magistrates, who, as they had before forbid the use of real names, forbade afterwards, real subjects, and the train of choruses[e] too much given to abuse; so that the poets saw themselves reduced to the necessity of bringing imaginary names and subjects upon the stage, which, at once, purified and enriched the theatre; for comedy, from that time, was no longer a fury armed with torches, but a pleasing and innocent mirror of human life.

> Chacun peint avec art dans ce nouveau miroir
> S'y vit avec plaisir, ou crut ne s'y pas voir!
> L'avare des premiers rit du tableau fidèle
> D'un avare souvent tracé sur son modèle;
> Et mille fois un fat finement exprimé
> Méconnut le portrait sur lui-même formé.[f]

The comedy of Menander and Terence is, in propriety of speech, the fine comedy. I do not repeat all this after so many writers, but just to recall it to memory, and to add to what they have said, something which they have omitted, a singular effect of publick edicts appearing in the successive progress of the art. A naked history of poets and of poetry, such as has been often given, is a mere body without soul, unless it be enlivened with an account of the birth, progress, and perfection of the art, and of the causes by which they were produced.

6. THE LATIN COMEDY.

To omit nothing essential which concerns this part, we shall say a word of the Latin comedy. When the arts passed from Greece to Rome, comedy took its turn among the rest; but the Romans applied themselves only to the new species, without chorus or personal abuse; though, perhaps, they might have played some translations

[e] Perhaps the chorus was forbid in the middle age of the comedy. Platonius seems to say so.

[f] Despréaux Art Poét. chant. 8.

of the old or the middle comedy; for Pliny gives an account of one which was represented in his own time. But the Roman comedy, which was modelled upon the last species of the Greek, hath, nevertheless, its different ages, according as its authors were rough or polished. The pieces of Livius Andronicus[g], more ancient, and less refined than those of the writers who learned the art from him, may be said to compose the first age, or the old Roman comedy and tragedy. To him you must join Nevius, his contemporary, and Ennius, who lived some years after him. The second age comprises Pacuvius, Cecilius, Accius, and Plautus, unless it shall be thought better to reckon Plautus with Terence, to make the third and highest age of the Latin comedy, which may properly be called the new comedy, especially with regard to Terence, who was the friend of Lelius, and the faithful copier of Menander.

But the Romans, without troubling themselves with this order of succession, distinguished their comedies by the dresses[h] of the players. The robe, called prætexta, with large borders of purple, being the formal dress of magistrates in their dignity, and in the exercise of their office, the actors, who had this dress, gave its name to the comedy. This is the same with that called trabeata[i], from trabea, the dress of the consuls in peace, and the generals in triumph. The second species introduced the senators, not in great offices, but as private men; this was called togata, from toga. The last species was named tabernaria, from the tunick, or the common dress of the people, or rather from the mean houses which were painted on the scene. There is no need of mentioning the farces, which took their name and original from Atella, an ancient town of Campania, in Italy, because they differed from the low comedy only by greater licentiousness; nor of those which were called palliates, from the Greek, a cloak, in which

[g] The year of Rome 514, the first year of the 135th Olympiad.

[h] Prætextæ, Togatæ, Tabernariæ.

[i] Suet. de Claris Grammat. says, that C. Melissus, librarian to Augustus, was the author of it.

the Greek characters were dressed upon the Roman stage, because that habit only distinguished the nation, not the dignity or character, like those which have been mentioned before. To say truth, these are but trifling distinctions; for, as we shall show in the following pages, comedy may be more usefully and judiciously distinguished by the general nature of its subjects. As to the Romans, whether they had, or had not, reason for these names, they have left us so little upon the subject, which is come down to us, that we need not trouble ourselves with a distinction which affords us no solid satisfaction. Plautus and Terence, the only authors of whom we are in possession, give us a fuller notion of the real nature of their comedy, with respect, at least, to their own times, than can be received from names and terms, from which we have no real exemplification.

7. THE GREEK COMEDY IS REDUCED ONLY TO ARISTOPHANES.

Not to go too far out of our way, let us return to Aristophanes, the only poet, in whom we can now find the Greek comedy. He is the single writer whom the violence of time has, in some degree, spared, after having buried in darkness, and almost in forgetfulness, so many great men, of whom we have nothing but the names and a few fragments, and such slight memorials, as are scarcely sufficient to defend them against the enemies of the honour of antiquity; yet these memorials are like the last glimmer of the setting sun, which scarce affords us a weak and fading light; yet from this glimmer we must endeavour to collect rays of sufficient strength to form a picture of the Greek comedy, approaching as near as possible to the truth.

Of the personal character of Aristophanes, little is known; what account we can give of it must, therefore, be had from his comedies. It can scarcely be said, with certainty; of what country he was: the invectives of his enemies so often called in question his qualification as a citizen, that they have made it doubtful. Some said, he was of Rhodes, others of Egina, a little island in the neigh-

bourhood, and all agreed that he was a stranger. As to himself, he said, that he was the son of Philip, and born in the Cydathenian quarter; but he confessed, that some of his fortune was in Egina, which was, probably, the original seat of his family. He was, however, formally declared a citizen of Athens, upon evidence, whether good or bad, upon a decisive judgment, and this for having made his judges merry by an application of a saying of Telemachus[k], of which this is the sense: "I am, as my mother tells me, the son of Philip: for my own part, I know little of the matter; for what child knows his own father?" This piece of merriment did him as much good, as Archias received from the oration of Cicero[l], who said that that poet was a Roman citizen. An honour which, if he had not inherited by birth, he deserved for his genius.

Aristophanes[m] flourished in the age of the great men of Greece, particularly of Socrates and Euripides, both of whom he outlived. He made a great figure during the whole Peloponnesian war, not merely as a comick poet, by whom the people were diverted, but as the censor of the government, as a man kept in pay by the state to reform it, and almost to act the part of the arbitrator of the publick[n]. A particular account of his comedies will best let us into his personal character as a poet, and into the nature of his genius, which is what we are most interested to know. It will, however, not be amiss to prepossess our readers a little by the judgments that have been passed upon him by the criticks of our own time, without forgetting one of the ancients that deserves great respect.

8. ARISTOPHANES CENSURED AND PRAISED.

"Aristophanes," says father Rapin, "is not exact in

[k] Homer, Odyssey.

[l] Orat. pro Archia Poeta.

[m] In the year of the 85th Olympiad; 437 before our æra, and 317 of the foundation of Rome.

[n] The Greek comedies have been regarded, by many, in the light of political journals, the Athenian newspapers of the day, where, amidst the distortions of caricature, the lineaments of the times were strongly drawn. See Madame de Staël de la Litérature, c. iii.—Ed.

the contrivance of his fables; his fictions are not probable; he brings real characters upon the stage too coarsely, and too openly. Socrates, whom he ridicules so much in his plays, had a more delicate turn of burlesque than himself, and had his merriment without his impudence. It is true, that Aristophanes wrote amidst the confusion and licentiousness of the old comedy, and he was well acquainted with the humour of the Athenians, to whom uncommon merit always gave disgust, and, therefore, he made the eminent men of his time the subject of his merriment. But the too great desire which he had to delight the people, by exposing worthy characters upon the stage, made him, at the same time, an unworthy man; and the turn of his génius to ridicule was disfigured and corrupted by the indelicacy and outrageousness of his manners. After all, his pleasantry consists chiefly in new-coined puffy language. The dish of twenty-six syllables, which he gives, in his last scene of his Female Orators, would please few tastes in our days. His language is sometimes obscure, perplexed and vulgar; and his frequent play with words, his oppositions of contradictory terms, his mixture of tragick and comick, of serious and burlesque, are all flat; and his jocularity, if you examine it to the bottom, is all false. Menander is diverting in a more elegant manner; his style is pure, clear, elevated, and natural; he persuades like an orator, and instructs like a philosopher; and, if we may venture to judge upon the fragments which remain, it appears that his pictures of civil life are pleasing, that he makes every one speak according to his character, that every man may apply his pictures of life to himself, because he always follows nature, and feels for the personages which he brings upon the stage. To conclude, Plutarch, in his comparison of these authors, says, that the muse of Aristophanes is an abandoned prostitute, and that of Menander a modest woman."

It is evident that this whole character is taken from Plutarch. Let us now go on with this remark of father Ra-

pin, since we have already spoken of the Latin comedy, of which he gives us a description.

" With respect to the two Latin comick poets, Plautus is ingenious in his designs, happy in his conceptions, and fruitful of invention. He has, however, according to Horace, some low jocularities; and those smart sayings, which made the vulgar laugh, made him be pitied by men of higher taste. It is true, that some of his jests are extremely good, but others, likewise, are very bad. To this every man is exposed, who is too much determined to make sallies of merriment; they endeavour to raise that laughter by hyperboles, which would not arise by a just representation of things. Plautus is not quite so regular as Terence in the scheme of his designs, or in the distribution of his acts, but he is more simple in his plot; for the fables of Terence are commonly complex, as may be seen in his Andria, which contains two amours. It was imputed, as a fault to Terence, that, to bring more action upon the stage, he made one Latin comedy out of two Greek: but then Terence unravels his plot more naturally than Plautus, which Plautus did more naturally than Aristophanes; and though Cæsar calls Terence but one half of Menander, because, though he had softness and delicacy, there was in him some want of sprightliness and strength; yet he has written in a manner so natural and so judicious, that, though he was then only a copy, he is now an original. No author has ever had a more exact sense of pure nature. Of Cecilius, since we have only a few fragments, I shall say nothing. All that we know of him is told us by Varrus, that he was happy in the choice of subjects."

Rapin omits many others for the same reason, that we have not enough of their works to qualify us for judges. While we are upon this subject, it will, perhaps, not displease the reader to see what that critick's opinion is of Lopes de Vega and Molière. It will appear, that with respect to Lopes de Vega, he is rather too profuse of praise: that, in speaking of Molière, he is too parsimonious.

This piece will, however, be of use to our design, when we shall examine to the bottom what it is that ought to make the character of comedy.

"No man has ever had a greater genius for comedy than Lopes de Vega, the Spaniard. He had a fertility of wit, joined with great beauty of conception, and a wonderful readiness of composition; for he has written more than three hundred comedies. His name, alone, gave reputation to his pieces; for his reputation was so well established, that a work, which came from his hands, was sure to claim the approbation of the publick. He had a mind too extensive to be subjected to rules, or restrained by limits. For that reason he gave himself up to his own genius, on which he could always depend with confidence. When he wrote, he consulted no other laws than the taste of his auditors, and regulated his manner more by the success of his work than by the rules of reason. Thus he discarded all scruples of unity, and all the superstitions of probability." (This is certainly not said with a design to praise him, and must be connected with that which immediately follows.) "But as, for the most part, he endeavours at too much jocularity, and carries ridicule to too much refinement; his conceptions are often rather happy than just, and rather wild than natural; for, by subtilizing merriment too far, it becomes too nice to be true, and his beauties lose their power of striking by being too delicate and acute.

"Among us, nobody has carried ridicule in comedy farther than Molière. Our ancient comick writers brought no characters higher than servants to make sport upon the theatre; but we are diverted upon the theatre of Molière by marquises and people of quality. Others have exhibited, in comedy, no species of life above that of a citizen; but Molière shows us all Paris, and the court. He is the only man amongst us, who has laid open those features of nature by which he is exactly marked, and may be accurately known. The beauties of his pictures are so natural, that they are felt by persons of the least

discernment, and his power of pleasantry received half its force from his power of copying. His Misanthrope is, in my opinion, the most complete, and, likewise, the most singular character that has ever appeared upon the stage: but the disposition of his comedies is always defective some way or another. This is all which we can observe, in general, upon comedy."

Such are the thoughts of one of the most refined judges of works of genius, from which, though they are not all oraculous, some advantages may be drawn, as they always make some approaches to truth.

Madame Dacier[o], having her mind full of the merit of Aristophanes, expresses herself in this manner: "No man had ever more discernment than him, in finding out the ridiculous, nor a more ingenious manner of showing it to others. His remarks are natural and easy, and, what very rarely can be found, with great copiousness, he has great delicacy. To say all at once, the Attick wit, of which the ancients made such boast, appears more in Aristophanes than in any other that I know of in antiquity. But what is most of all to be admired in him is, that he is always so much master of the subject before him, that, without doing any violence to himself, he finds a way to introduce, naturally, things which, at first, appeared most distant from his purpose; and even the most quick and unexpected of his desultory sallies appear the necessary consequence of the foregoing incidents. This is that art which sets the dialogues of Plato above imitation, which we must consider as so many dramatick pieces, which are equally entertaining by the action, and by the dialogue. The style of Aristophanes is no less pleasing than his fancy; for, besides its clearness, its vigour and its sweetness, there is in it a certain harmony, so delightful to the ear, that there is no pleasure equal to that of reading it. When he applies himself to vulgar mediocrity of style, he descends without meanness; when he attempts the sublime, he is elevated without obscurity; and no man

[o] Preface to Plautus. Paris, 1684.

has ever had the art of blending all the different kinds of writing so equally together. After having studied all that is left us of Grecian learning, if we have not read Aristophanes, we cannot yet know all the charms and beauties of that language."

9. PLUTARCH'S SENTIMENTS UPON ARISTOPHANES AND MENANDER.

This is a pompous eulogium; but let us suspend our opinion, and hear that of Plutarch, who, being an ancient, well deserves our attention, at least, after we have heard the moderns before him. This is then the sum of his judgment concerning Aristophanes and Menander. To Menander he gives the preference, without allowing much competition. He objects to Aristophanes, that he carries all his thoughts beyond nature; that he writes rather to the crowd than to men of character; that he affects a style obscure and licentious; tragical, pompous, and mean, sometimes serions, and sometimes ludicrous, even to puerility; that he makes none of his personages speak according to any distinct character, so that in his scenes the son cannot be known from the father, the citizen from the boor, the hero from the shopkeeper, or the divine from the servingman. Whereas, the diction of Menander, which is always uniform and pure, is very justly adapted to different characters, rising, when it is necessary, to vigorous and sprightly comedy, yet without transgressing the proper limits, or losing sight of nature, in which Menander, says Plutarch, has attained a perfection to which no other writer has arrived. For, what man, besides himself, has ever found the art of making a diction equally suitable to women and children, to old and young, to divinities and heroes? Now Menander has found this happy secret, in the equality and flexibility of his diction, which, though always the same, is, nevertheless, different upon different occasions; like a current of clear water, (to keep closely to the thoughts of Plutarch,) which running through banks differently turned, complies with all their turns backward and forward, with-

out changing any thing of its nature or its purity. Plutarch mentions it, as a part of the merit of Menander, that he began very young, and was stopped only by old age, at a time when he would have produced the greatest wonders, if death had not prevented him. This, joined to a reflection, which he makes as he returns to Aristophanes, shows that Aristophanes continued a long time to display his powers: for his poetry, says Plutarch, is a strumpet that affects sometimes the airs of a prude, but whose impudence cannot be forgiven by the people, and whose affected modesty is despised by men of decency. Menander, on the contrary, always shows himself a man agreeable and witty, a companion desirable upon the stage, at table, and in gay assemblies; an extract of all the treasures of Greece, who deserves always to be read, and always to please. His irresistible power of persuasion, and the reputation which he has had, of being the best master of language of Greece, sufficiently shows the delightfulness of his style. Upon this article of Menander, Plutarch does not know how to make an end; he says, that he is the delight of philosophers, fatigued with study; that they use his works as a meadow enamelled with flowers, where a purer air gratifies the sense; that, notwithstanding the powers of the other comick poets of Athens, Menander has always been considered as possessing a salt peculiar to himself, drawn from the same waters that gave birth to Venus. That, on the contrary, the salt of Aristophanes is bitter, keen, coarse, and corrosive; that one cannot tell whether his dexterity, which has been so much boasted, consists not more in the characters than in the expression, for he is charged with playing often upon words, with affecting antithetical allusions; that he has spoiled the copies which he endeavoured to take after nature; that artifice in his plays is wickedness, and simplicity brutishness; that his jocularity ought to raise hisses rather than laughter; that his amours have more impudence than gaiety; and that he has not so much written for men of understanding, as for minds blackened with envy, and corrupted with debauchery.

10. THE JUSTIFICATION OF ARISTOPHANES.

After such a character there seems no need of going further; and one would think, that it would be better to bury, for ever, the memory of so hateful a writer, that makes us so poor a recompense for the loss of Menander, who cannot be recalled. But, without showing any mercy to the indecent or malicious sallies of Aristophanes, any more than to Plautus, his imitator, or, at least, the inheritor of his genius, may it not be allowed us to do, with respect to him, what, if I mistake not, Lucretius[p] did to Ennius, from whose muddy verses he gathered jewels, "Enni de stercore gemmas?"

Besides, we must not believe that Plutarch, who lived more than four ages after Menander, and more than five after Aristophanes, has passed so exact a judgment upon both, but that it may be fit to reexamine it. Plato, the contemporary of Aristophanes, thought very differently, at least, of his genius; for, in his piece called the Entertainment, he gives that poet a distinguished place, and makes him speak, according to his character, with Socrates himself, from which, by the way, it is apparent that this dialogue of Plato was composed before the time that Aristophanes wrote his Clouds, against Socrates. Plato is, likewise, said to have sent a copy of Aristophanes to Dionysius the tyrant, with advice to read it diligently, if he would attain a complete judgment of the state of the Athenian republick[q].

Many other scholars have thought that they might depart somewhat from the opinion of Plutarch. Frischlinus, for example, one of the commentators upon Aristophanes, though he justly allows his taste to be less pure than that of Menander, has yet undertaken his defence against the

[p] Brumoy has mistaken Lucretius for Virgil.

[q] "Morum hujus temporis picturam, velut in speculo, suis in comœdiis repræsentavit Aristophanes." Valckenaer, Oratio de publicis Atheniensium moribus.—Ed.

outrageous censure of the ancient critick. In the first place, he condemns, without mercy, his ribaldry and obscenity. But this part, so worthy of contempt, and written only for the lower people, according to the remark of Boivin, bad as it is, after all, is not the chief part which is left of Aristophanes. I will not say, with Frischlinus, that Plutarch seems in this to contradict himself, and, in reality, commends the poet when he accuses him of having adapted his language to the stage; by the stage, in this place, he meant the theatre of farces, on which low mirth and buffoonery was exhibited. This plea of Frischlinus is a mere cavil; and though the poet had obtained his end, which was to divert a corrupted populace, he would not have been less a bad man, nor less a despicable poet, notwithstanding the excuse of his defender. To be able, in the highest degree, to divert fools and libertines, will not make a poet: it is not, therefore, by this defence that we must justify the character of Aristophanes. The depraved taste of the crowd, who once drove away Cratinus and his company, because the scenes had not low buffoonery enough for their taste, will not justify Aristophanes, since Menander found a way of changing the taste by giving a sort of comedy, not, indeed, so modest as Plutarch represents it, but less licentious than before. Nor is Aristophanes better justified, by the reason which he himself offers, when he says, that he exhibited debauchery upon the stage, not to corrupt the morals, but to mend them. The sight of gross faults is rather a poison than a remedy[r].

The apologist has forgot one reason, which appears to me to be essential to a just account. As far as we can judge by appearance, Plutarch had in his hands all the plays of Aristophanes, which were at least fifty in number.

[r] Vice is a monster of so frightful mien,
As, to be hated, needs but to be seen;
Yet seen too oft, familiar with her face,
We first endure, then pity, then embrace.

Pope's Essay on Man, ii. 217.

In these he saw more licentiousness than has come to our hands, though, in the eleven that are still remaining, there is much more than could be wished.

Plutarch censures him, in the second place, for playing upon words; and against this charge Frischlinus defends him with less skill. It is impossible to exemplify this in French. But, after all, this part is so little, that it deserved not so severe a reprehension, especially since, amongst those sayings, there are some so mischievously malignant, that they became proverbial, at least by the sting of their malice, if not by the delicacy of their wit. One example will be sufficient: speaking of the tax-gatherers, or the excisemen of Athens, he crushes them at once, by observing, non quod essent ταμίαι, sed λαμίαι. The word *lamiæ* signified, walking spirits, which, according to the vulgar notion, devoured men; this makes the spirit of the sarcasm against the tax-gatherers. This cannot be rendered in our language; but if any thing as good had been said in France, on the like occasion, it would have lasted too long, and, like many other sayings amongst us, been too well received. The best is that Plutarch himself confesses that it was extremely applauded.

The third charge is, a mixture of tragick and comick style. This accusation is certainly true; Aristophanes often gets into the buskin; but we must examine upon what occasion. He does not take upon him the character of a tragick writer; but, having remarked that his trick of parody was always well received, by a people who liked to laugh at that for which they had been just weeping, he is eternally using the same craft; and there is scarcely any tragedy or striking passage known by memory, by the Athenians, which he does not turn into merriment, by throwing over it a dress of ridicule and burlesque, which is done sometimes by changing or transposing the words, and sometimes by an unexpected application of the whole sentence. These are the shreds of tragedy, in which he arrays the comick muse, to make her still more comick. Cratinus had before done the same thing; and we know that he

made a comedy called Ulysses, to burlesque Homer and his Odyssey; which shows, that the wits and poets are, with respect to one another, much the same at all times, and that it was at Athens as here. I will prove this system by facts, particularly with respect to the merriment of Aristophanes, upon our three celebrated tragedians. This being the case, the mingled style of Aristophanes will, perhaps, not deserve so much censure as Plutarch has vented. We have no need of the travesty of Virgil, nor the parodies of our own time, nor of the Lutrin of Boileau, to show us, that this medly may have its merit upon particular occasions.

The same may be said, in general, of his obscurity, his meannesses, and his high flights, and of all the seeming inequality of style, which puts Plutarch in a rage. These censures can never be just upon a poet, whose style has always been allowed to be perfectly attick, and of an atticism which made him extremely delightful to the lovers of the Athenian taste. Plutarch, perhaps, rather means to blame the choruses, of which the language is sometimes elevated, sometimes burlesque, always very poetical, and, therefore, in appearance, not suitable to comedy. But the chorus, which had been borrowed from tragedy, was then all the fashion, particularly for pieces of satire, and Aristophanes admitted them, like the other poets of the old, and, perhaps, of the middle comedy; whereas Menander suppressed them, not so much in compliance with his own judgment, as in obedience to the publick edicts. It is not, therefore, this mixture of tragick and comick that will place Aristophanes below Menander.

The fifth charge is, that he kept no distinction of character; that, for example, he makes women speak like orators, and orators like slaves: but it appears, by the characters which he ridicules, that this objection falls of itself. It is sufficient to say, that a poet who painted not imaginary characters, but real persons, men well known, citizens whom he called by their names, and showed in dresses

like their own, and masks resembling their faces, whom he branded in the sight of a whole city extremely haughty and full of derision; it is sufficient to say, that such a poet could never be supposed to miss his characters. The applause which his licentiousness produced, is too good a justification; besides, if he had not succeeded, he exposed himself to the fate of Eupolis, who, in a comedy called the Drowned Man, having imprudently pulled to pieces particular persons, more powerful than himself, was laid hold of, and drowned more effectually than those he had drowned upon the open stage.

The condemnation of the poignancy of Aristophanes, as having too much acrimony, is better founded. Such was the turn of a species of comedy, in which all licentiousness was allowed; in a nation which made every thing a subject of laughter, in its jealousy of immoderate liberty, and its enmity, to all appearance, of rule and superiority; for the genius of independency, naturally produces a kind of satire, more keen than delicate, as may be easily observed in most of the inhabitants of islands. If we do not say, with Longinus, that a popular government kindles eloquence, and that a lawful monarchy stifles it; at least it is easy to discover, by the event, that eloquence in different governments takes a different appearance. In republicks it is more sprightly and violent, and in monarchies more insinuating and soft. The same thing may be said of ridicule; it follows the cast of genius, as genius follows that of government. Thus the republican raillery, particularly of the age which we are now considering, must have been rougher than that of the age which followed it, for the same reason that Horace is more delicate, and Lucilius more pointed. A dish of satire was always a delicious treat to human malignity; but that dish was differently seasoned, as the manners were polished more or less. By polished manners I mean that good-breeding, that art of reserve and self-restraint, which is the consequence of dependance. If one was to determine the preference due to one of those kinds of pleasantry, of which both have their

value, there would not need a moment's hesitation: every voice would join in favour of the softer, yet without contempt of that which is rough. Menander will, therefore, be preferred, but Aristophanes will not be despised, especially since he was the first who quitted that wild practice of satirizing at liberty right or wrong, and by a comedy of another cast, made way for the manner of Menander, more agreeable yet, and less dangerous. There is, yet, another distinction to be made between the acrimony of the one, and the softness of the other; the works of the one are acrimonious, and of the other soft, because, the one exhibited personal, and the other, general characters; which leaves us still at liberty to examine, if these different designs might not be executed with equal delicacy.

We shall know this by a view of the particulars; in this place we say only that the reigning taste, or the love of striking likenesses, might justify Aristophanes for having turned, as Plutarch says, art into malignity, simplicity into brutality, merriment into farce, and amour into impudence; if, in any age, a poet could be excused for painting publick folly and vice, in their true colours.

There is a motive of interest, at the bottom, which disposed Elian, Plutarch, and many others, to condemn this poet without appeal. Socrates, who is said to have been destroyed by a poetical attack, at the instigation of two wretches[s], has too many friends among good men, to have

[s] It is not certain, that Aristophanes did procure the death of Socrates; but, however, he is certainly criminal for having, in the Clouds, accused him, publickly, of impiety. B.—Many ingenious arguments have been advanced, since he time of Brumoy and Johnson, in vindication of Aristophanes, with regard to Socrates. It has been urged, that a man, of the established character of Socrates, could not be injured by the dramatic imputation of faults and follies, from which every individual in the theatre believed him to be exempt; while he vices of the sophists and rhetors, whom Aristophanes was really attacking, were placed in a more ludicrous, or more odious light, by a mental juxta-position with the pure and stern virtue of the master of Plato. This is very plausible; but it may still be doubted, whether the greater part of an Athenian audience, with all their native acuteness and practical criticism, would, at the moment, detect this subtile irony. If, indeed, it was irony, for still, with deference to great names be it spoken, it remains to be disproved, that the Clouds was the

pardon granted to so horrid a crime. This has filled them with an implacable hatred against Aristophanes, which is mingled with the spirit of philosophy; a spirit, wherever it comes, more dangerous than any other. A common enemy will confess some good qualities in his adversary; but a philosopher, made partial by philosophy, is never at rest till he has totally destroyed him who has hurt the most tender part of his heart; that is, has disturbed him in his adherence to some character, which, like that of Socrates, takes possession of the mind. The mind is the freest part of man, and the most tender of its liberties; possessions, life, and reputation may be in another's power, but opinion is always independent. If any man can obtain that gentle influence, by which he ingratiates himself with the understanding, and makes a sect in a commonwealth, his followers will sacrifice themselves for him, and nobody will be pardoned that dares to attack him, justly or unjustly, because that truth, real or imaginary, which he maintained, is now become an idol. Time will do nothing for the extinction of this hatred; it will be propagated from age to age; and there is no hope that Aristophanes will ever be treated with tenderness by the disciples of Plato, who made Socrates his hero. Every body else may, perhaps, confess, that Aristophanes, though in one instance a bad man, may, nevertheless, be a good poet; but distinctions,

introductory step to a state-impeachment. Irony is, at best, a dangerous weapon, and has, too frequently, been wielded by vulgar hands, to purposes widely different from those which its authors designed. The Tartuffe exposed to the indignation of France, a character, which every good man detests. But, was the cause of religious sincerity benefited, by Molière's representation of a sullen, sly, and sensual hypocrite? Did the French populace discriminate between such, and the sincere professor of christianity? The facts of the revolution give an awful answer to the question. Cervantes ridiculed the fooleries and affectation ingrafted upon knight errantry. Did he intend to banish honour, humanity and virtue, loyalty, courtesy and gentlemanly feeling from Spain? The people understood not irony, and Don Quixote combined with other causes, to degrade to its present abasement a land, so long renowned for her high and honourable chivalry, for "ladye-love, and feats of knightly worth." See likewise note on Adventurer, 84, and the references there made; and preface to the Idler.—Ed.

like these, will not be admitted by prejudice and passion, and one or other dictates all characters, whether good or bad.

As I add my own reasons, such as they are, for or against Aristophanes, to those of Frischlinus, his defender, I must not omit one thing which he has forgot, and which, perhaps, without taking in the rest, put Plutarch out of humour, which is that perpetual farce which goes through all the comedies of Aristophanes, like the character of harlequin on the Italian theatre. What kind of personages are clouds, frogs, wasps, and birds? Plutarch, used to a comick stage of a very different appearance, must have thought them strange things; and, yet stranger must they appear to us, who have a newer kind of comedy, with which the Greeks were unacquainted. This is what our poet may be charged with, and what may be proved beyond refutation. This charge comprises all the rest, and against this I shall not pretend to justify him. It would be of no use to say, that Aristophanes wrote for an age that required shows which filled the eye, and grotesque paintings in satirical performances; that the crowds of spectators, which sometimes neglected Cratinus to throng Aristophanes, obliged him, more and more, to comply with the ruling taste, lest he should lose the publick favour by pictures more delicate and less striking; that, in a state, where it was considered as policy to lay open every thing that had the appearance of ambition, singularity, or knavery, comedy was become a haranguer, a reformer, and a publick counsellor, from whom the people learned to take care of their most valuable interests; and that this comedy, in the attempt to lead, and to please the people, claimed a right to the strongest touches of eloquence, and had, likewise, the power of personal painting, peculiar to herself. All these reasons, and many others, would disappear immediately, and my mouth would be stopped with a single word, with which every body would agree: my antagonist would tell me that such an age was to be pitied, and, passing on from age to age, till he came to our own, he would conclude

flatly, that we are the only possessours of common sense; a determination with which the French are too much reproached, and which overthrows all the prejudice in favour of antiquity. At the sight of so many happy touches, which one cannot help admiring in Aristophanes, a man might, perhaps, be inclined to lament that such a genius was thrown into an age of fools; but what age has been without them? And have not we ourselves reason to fear, lest posterity should judge of Molière and his age, as we judge of Aristophanes? Menander altered the taste, and was applauded in Athens, but it was after Athens was changed. Terence imitated him at Rome, and obtained the preference over Plautus, though Cæsar called him but a demi-Menander, because he appears to want that spirit and vivacity which he calls the vis comica. We are now weary of the manner of Menander and Terence, and leave them for Molière, who appears like a new star in a new course. Who can answer, that in such an interval of time as has passed between these four writers, there will not arise another author, or another taste, that may bring Molière, in his turn, into neglect? Without going further, our neighbours, the English, think he wants force and fire. Whether they are right, or no, is another question; all that I mean to advance is, that we are to fix it as a conclusion, that comick authors must grow obsolete with the modes of life, if we admit any one age, or any one climate, for the sovereign rule of taste. But let us talk with more exactness, and endeavour, by an exact analysis, to find out what there is in comedy, whether of Aristophanes and Plautus, of Menander and Terence, of Molière and his rivals, which is never obsolete, and must please all ages and all nations.

11. REMARKABLE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE STATE OF COMEDY, AND OTHER WORKS OF GENIUS, WITH REGARD TO THEIR DURATION.

I now speak particularly of comedy; for we must observe that between that and other works of literature, espe-

cially tragedy, there is an essential difference, which the enemies of antiquity will not understand, and which I shall endeavour palpably to show.

All works show the age in which they are produced; they carry its stamp upon them; the manners of the times are impressed by indelible marks. If it be allowed, that the best of past times were rude in comparison with ours, the cause of the ancients is decided against them; and the want of politeness, with which their works are charged, in our days, must be generally confessed. History alone seems to claim exemption from this accusation. Nobody will dare to say of Herodotus or Thucydides, of Livius or Tacitus, that which has been said, without scruple, of Homer and the ancient poets. The reason is, that history takes the nearest way to its purpose, and gives the characters and practices of nations, be they what they will; it has no dependance upon its subject, and offers nothing to examination, but the art of the narrative. An history of China, well written, would please a Frenchman, as well as one of France. It is otherwise with mere works of genius, they depend upon their subjects, and, consequently, upon the characters and practices of the times in which they were written; this, at least, is the light in which they are beheld. This rule of judgment is not equitable; for, as I have said, over and over, all the orators and the poets are painters, and merely painters. They exhibit nature, as it is before them, influenced by the accidents of education, which, without changing it entirely, yet give it, in different ages and climates, a different appearance; but we make their success depend, in a great degree, upon their subject, that is, upon circumstances which we measure by the circumstances of our own days. According to this prejudice, oratory depends more upon its subject than history, and poetry yet more than oratory. Our times, therefore, show more regard to Herodotus and Suetonius, than to Demosthenes and Cicero, and more to all these than to Homer or Virgil. Of this prejudice, there are regular gradations; and to come back to the point which we have left, we

show, for the same imperceptible reason, less regard to tragick poets than to others. The reason is, that the subjects of their paintings are more examined than the art. Thus comparing the Achilles and Hippolytus of Euripides, with those of Racine, we drive them off the stage, without considering that Racine's heroes will be driven off, in a future age, if the same rule of judgment be followed, and one time be measured by another.

Yet tragedy, having the passions for its object, is not wholly exposed to the caprice of our taste, which would make our own manners the rule of human kind; for the passions of Grecian heroes are often dressed in external modes of appearance that disgust us, yet they break through the veil when they are strongly marked, as we cannot deny them to be in Eschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides. The essence then gets the better of the circumstance. The passions of Greece and France do not so much differ by the particular characters of particular ages, as they agree by the participation of that which belongs to the same passion in all ages. Our three tragick poets will, therefore, get clear by suffering only a little ridicule, which falls directly upon their times; but these times and themselves will be well recompensed, by the admiration which their art will irresistibly enforce.

Comedy is in a more lamentable situation; for, not only its object is the ridiculous, which, though in reality always the same, is so dependant on custom, as to change its appearance with time, and with place; but the art of a comick writer is, to lay hold of that species of the ridiculous which will catch the spectators of the present hour, without regard to futurity. But, though comedy has attained its end, and diverted the pit, for which it was written; if it goes down to posterity, it is a new world, where it is no longer known; it becomes there quite a foreigner, because there are no longer the same originals, nor the same species of the ridiculous, nor the same spectators, but a set of merciless readers, who complain that they are tired with it, though it once filled Athens, Rome, or Paris, with

merriment. This position is general, and comprises all poets and all ages. To say all, at once, comedy is the slave of its subject, and of the reigning taste; tragedy is not subject to the same degree of slavery, because the ends of the two species of poetry are different. For this reason, if we suppose that in all ages there are criticks, who measure every thing by the same rule, it will follow, that if the comedy of Aristophanes be become obsolete, that of Menander, likewise, after having delighted Athens, and revived again at Rome, at last suffered by the force of time. The muse of Molière has almost made both of them forgotten, and would still be walking the stage, if the desire of novelty did not in time make us weary of that which we have too frequently admired.

Those, who have endeavoured to render their judgment independent upon manners and customs, and of such men there have been always some, have not judged so severely either of times, or of writers; they have discovered that a certain resemblance runs through all polished ages, which are alike in essential things, and differ only in external manners, which, if we except religion, are things of indifference; that, wherever there is genius, politeness, liberty, or plenty, there prevails an exact and delicate taste, which, however hard to be expressed, is felt by those that were born to feel it; that Athens, the inventress of all the arts, the mother first of the Roman, and then of general taste, did not consist of stupid savages; that the Athenian and Augustan ages having always been considered as times that enjoyed a particular privilege of excellence, though we may distinguish the good authors from the bad, as in our own days, yet we ought to suspend the vehemence of criticism, and proceed with caution and timidity, before we pass sentence upon times and writers, whose good taste has been universally applauded. This obvious consideration has disposed them to pause; they have endeavoured to discover the original of taste, and have found that there is not only a stable and immutable beauty, as there is a common understanding in all times and places,

which is never obsolete; but there is another kind of beauty, such as we are now treating, which depends upon times and places, and is, therefore, changeable. Such is the imperfection of every thing below, that one mode of beauty is never found without a mixture of the other, and from these two, blended together, results what is called the taste of an age. I am now speaking of an age sprightly and polite, an age which leaves works for a long time behind it, an age which is imitated or criticised, when revolutions have thrown it out of sight.

Upon this incontestable principle, which supposes a beauty, universal and absolute, and a beauty, likewise, relative and particular, which are mingled through one work in very different proportions, it is easy to give an account of the contrary judgments passed on Aristophanes. If we consider him only with respect to the beauties, which, though they do not please us, delighted the Athenians, we shall condemn him at once, though even this sort of beauty may, sometimes, have its original in universal beauty carried to extravagance. Instead of commending him for being able to give merriment to the most refined nation of those days, we shall proceed to place that people, with all their atticism, in the rank of savages, whom we take upon us to degrade, because they have no other qualifications but innocence, and plain understanding. But have not we, likewise, amidst our more polished manners, beauties merely fashionable, which make part of our writings as of the writings of former times; beauties of which our self-love now makes us fond, but which, perhaps, will disgust our grandsons? Let us be more equitable; let us leave this relative beauty to its real value, more or less, in every age: or, if we must pass judgment upon it, let us say that these touches in Aristophanes, Menander, and Molière, were well struck off in their own time; but that, comparing them with true beauty, that part of Aristophanes was a colouring too strong, that of Menander was too weak, and that of Molière was a peculiar varnish, formed of one and the other, which, without being an imitation,

is itself inimitable, yet depending upon time, which will efface it, by degrees, as our notions, which are every day changing, shall receive a sensible alteration. Much of this has already happened since the time of Molière, who, if he was now to come again, must take a new road.

With respect to unalterable beauties, of which comedy admits much fewer than tragedy, when they are the subject of our consideration, we must not, too easily, set Aristophanes and Plautus below Menander and Terence. We may properly hesitate with Boileau, whether we shall prefer the French comedy to the Greek and Latin. Let us only give, like him, the great rule for pleasing in all ages, and the key by which all the difficulties in passing judgment may be opened. This rule and this key are nothing else but the ultimate design of the comedy.

> Etudiez la cour, et connoissez la ville:
> L'une et l'autre est toujours en modèles fertile.
> C'est par-là que Molière illustrant ses écrits
> Peut-être de son art eût remporté le prix,
> Si, moins ami du peuple en ses doctes peintures,
> Il n'eût point fait souvent grimacer ses figures,
> Quitté pour le bouffon l'agréable et le fin,
> Et sans honte à Térence allié Tabarin[t].

In truth, Aristophanes and Plautus united buffoonery and delicacy, in a greater degree than Molière; and for this they may be blamed. That which then pleased at Athens, and at Rome, was a transitory beauty, which had not sufficient foundation in truth, and, therefore, the taste changed. But, if we condemn those ages for this, what age shall we spare? Let us refer every thing to permanent and universal taste, and we shall find in Aristophanes at least as much to commend as censure.

12. TRAGEDY MORE UNIFORM THAN COMEDY.

But before we go on to his works, it may be allowed to make some reflections upon tragedy and comedy. Tra-

[t] Boileau, Art. Poét. chant, 3.

gedy, though different, according to the difference of times and writers, is uniform in its nature, being founded upon the passions, which never change. With comedy it is otherwise. Whatever difference there is between Eschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides; between Corneille and Racine; between the French and the Greeks; it will not be found sufficient to constitute more than one species of tragedy.

The works of those great masters are, in some respects, like the seanymphs, of whom Ovid says, "That their faces were not the same, yet so much alike, that they might be known to be sisters;"

———facies non omnibus una,
Nec diversa tamen, qualem decet esse sororum.

The reason is, that the same passions give action and animation to them all. With respect to the comedies of Aristophanes and Plautus, Menander and Terence, Molière and his imitators, if we compare them one with another, we shall find something of a family likeness, but much less strongly marked, on account of the different appearance which ridicule and pleasantry take from the different manners of every age. They will not pass for sisters, but for very distant relations. The Muse of Aristophanes and Plautus, to speak of her with justice, is a bacchanal at least, whose malignant tongue is dipped in gall, or in poison dangerous as that of the aspick or viper; but whose bursts of malice, and sallies of wit, often give a blow where it is not expected. The Muse of Terence, and, consequently, of Menander, is an artless and unpainted beauty, of easy gaiety, whose features are rather delicate than striking, rather soft than strong, rather plain and modest than great and haughty, but always perfectly natural:

Ce n'est pas un portrait, une image semblable:
C'est un fils, un amant, un père véritable.

The Muse of Molière is not always plainly dressed, but takes airs of quality, and rises above her original condition, so as to attire herself gracefully in magnificent ap-

parel. In her manners she mingles elegance with foolery, force with delicacy and grandeur, or even haughtiness with plainness and modesty. If, sometimes, to please the people, she gives a loose to farce, it is only the gay folly of a moment, from which she immediately returns, and which lasts no longer than a slight intoxication. The first might be painted encircled with little satyrs, some grossly foolish, the others delicate, but all extremely licentious and malignant; monkeys always ready to laugh in your face, and to point out to indiscriminate ridicule, the good and the bad. The second may be shown encircled with geniuses full of softness and of candour, taught to please by nature alone, and whose honeyed dialect is so much the more insinuating, as there is no temptation to distrust it. The last must be accompanied with the delicate laughter of the court, and that of the city somewhat more coarse, and neither the one nor the other can be separated from her. The Muse of Aristophanes and of Plautus can never be denied the honour of sprightliness, animation, and invention; nor that of Menander and Terence the praise of nature and of delicacy; to that of Molière must be allowed the happy secret of uniting all the piquancy of the former, with a peculiar art which they did not know. Of these three sorts of merit, let us show to each the justice that is due, let us, in each, separate the pure and the true, from the false gold, without approving or condemning either the one or the other, in the gross. If we must pronounce, in general, upon the taste of their writings, we must indisputably allow that Menander, Terence and Molière, will give most pleasure to a decent audience, and, consequently, that they approach nearer to the true beauty, and have less mixture of beauties purely relative, than Plautus and Aristophanes.

If we distinguish comedy by its subjects, we shall find three sorts among the Greeks, and as many among the Latins, all differently dressed; if we distinguish it by ages and authors, we shall again find three sorts; and we shall find three sorts, a third time, if we regard more closely the

subject. As the ultimate and general rules of all these sorts of comedy are the same, it will, perhaps, be agreeable to our purpose to sketch them out, before we give a full display of the last class. I can do nothing better, on this occasion, than transcribe the twenty-fifth reflection of Rapin upon poetry in particular.

13. GENERAL RULES OF COMEDY.

"Comedy," says he[u], "is a representation of common life: its end is to show the faults of particular characters on the stage, to correct the disorder of the people by the fear of ridicule. Thus ridicule is the essential part of a comedy. Ridicule may be in words, or in things; it may be decent, or grotesque. To find what is ridiculous in every thing, is the gift merely of nature; for all the actions of life have their bright, and their dark sides; something serious, and something merry. But Aristotle, who has given rules for drawing tears, has given none for raising laughter; for this is merely the work of nature, and must proceed from genius, with very little help from art or matter. The Spaniards have a turn to find the ridicule in things, much more than we; and the Italians, who are natural comedians, have a better turn for expressing it; their language is more proper for it than ours, by an air of drollery which it can put on, and of which ours may become capable, when it shall be brought nearer to perfection. In short, that agreeable turn, that gaiety, which yet maintains the delicacy of its character, without falling into dulness or into buffoonery; that elegant raillery, which is the flower of fine wit, is the qualification which comedy requires. We must, however, remember that the true artificial ridicule, which is required on the theatre, must be only a transcript of the ridicule which nature affords. Comedy is naturally written, when, being on the theatre, a man can fancy himself in a private family, or a particular part of the town, and meets with nothing but

[u] Réflexions sur la poét. p. 154. Paris, 1684.

what he really meets with in the world; for it is no real comedy in which a man does not see his own picture, and find his own manners, and those of the people among whom he lives. Menander succeeded only by this art among the Greeks: and the Romans, when they sat at Terence's comedies, imagined themselves in a private party; for they found nothing there which they had not been used to find in common company. The great art of comedy is to adhere to nature, without deviation; to have general sentiments and expressions, which all the world can understand; for the writer must keep it always in his mind, that the coarsest touches after nature will please more, than the most delicate, with which nature is inconsistent. However, low and mean words should never be allowed upon the stage, if they are not supported with some kind of wit. Proverbs and vulgar smartnesses can never be suffered, unless they have something in them of nature and pleasantry. This is the universal principle of comedy; whatever is represented, in this manner must please, and nothing can ever please without it. It is by application to the study of nature alone, that we arrive at probability, which is the only infallible guide to theatrical success: without this probability, every thing is defective, and that which has it, is beautiful; he that follows this, can never go wrong; and the most common faults of comedy proceed from the neglect of propriety, and the precipitation of incidents. Care must, likewise, be taken, that the hints, made use of to introduce the incidents, are not too strong, that the spectator may enjoy the pleasure of finding out their meaning; but commonly the weak place in our comedy is the untying of the plot, in which we almost always fail, on account of the difficulty which there is in disentangling of what has been perplexed. To perplex an intrigue is easy; the imagination does it by itself; but it must be disentangled merely by the judgment, and is, therefore, seldom done happily; and he that reflects a very little, will find, that most comedies are faulty by an unnatural catastrophe. It re-

mains to be examined, whether comedy will allow pictures larger than the life, that this strength of the strokes may make a deeper impression upon the mind of the spectators; that is, if a poet may make a covetous man more covetous, and a peevish man more impertinent, and more troublesome than he really is. To which I answer, that this was the practice of Plautus, whose aim was to please the people, but that Terence, who wrote for gentlemen, confined himself within the compass of nature, and represented vice without addition or aggravation. However, these extravagant characters, such as the Citizen turned gentleman, and the Hypochrondriac patient of Molière, have lately succeeded at court, where delicacy is carried so far; but every thing, even to provincial interludes, is well received, if it has but merriment, for we had rather laugh than admire. These are the most important rules of comedy.

14. THREE SORTS OF COMEDY.

These rules, indeed, are common to the three kinds which I have in my mind; but it is necessary to distinguish each from the rest, which may be done by diversity of matter, which always makes some diversity of management. The old and middle comedy simply represented real adventures: in the same way some passages of history and of fable might form a class of comedies, which should resemble it without having its faults; such is the Amphitryon. How many moral tales, how many adventures, ancient and modern; how many little fables of Æsop, of Phædrus, of Fontaine, or some other ancient poet, would make pretty exhibitions, if they were all made use of as materials by skilful hands? And have we not seen some like Timon the man hater, that have been successful in this way? This sort chiefly regards the Italians. The ancient exhibition, called a satire, because the satyrs played their part in it, of which we have no other instance than the Cyclops of Euripides, has, without doubt, given occasion to the pastoral comedies, for which we are chiefly indebted to Italy, and which are there more cultivated than in France. It is,

however, a kind of exhibition that would have its charms, if it was touched with elegance and without meanness: it is the pastoral put into action. To conclude, the new comedy, invented by Menander, has produced the comedy, properly so called in our times. This is that which has for its subject general pictures of common life, and feigned names and adventures, whether of the court or of the city. This third kind is incontestably the most noble, and has received the strongest sanction from custom. It is, likewise, the most difficult to perform, because it is merely the work of invention, in which the poet has no help from real passages or persons, which the tragick poet always makes use of. Who knows but, by deep thinking, another kind of comedy may be invented, wholly different from the three which I have mentioned? such is the fruitfulness of comedy. But its course is already too wide for the discovery of new fields to be wished; and on ground where we are already so apt to stumble, nothing is so dangerous as novelty imperfectly understood. This is the rock on which men have often split, in every kind of pursuit; to go no further, in that of grammar and language, it is better to endeavour after novelty, in the manner of expressing common things, than to hunt for ideas out of the way, in which many a man loses himself. The ill success of that odd composition, tragick comedy, a monster wholly unknown to antiquity,[x] sufficiently shows the danger of novelty in attempts like these.

15. WHETHER TRAGEDY OR COMEDY BE THE HARDER TO WRITE[y].

To finish the parallel of the two dramas, a question may be revived equally common and important, which has been oftener proposed than well decided: it is, whether comedy or tragedy be most easy or difficult to be well executed. I shall not have the temerity to determine, positively, a question which so many great geniuses have been

[x] See note to preface to Shakespeare in this volume, page 103.

[y] See this subject treated with reference to Shakespeare in preface to Shakespeare, and notes.

afraid to decide; but, if it be allowed to every literary man to give his reason for and against a mere work of genius, considered without respect to its good or bad tendency, I shall, in a few words, give my opinion, drawn from the nature of the two works, and the qualifications they demand. Horace[z] proposes a question nearly of the same kind: "It has been inquired, whether a good poem be the work of art or nature? for my part, I do not see much to be done by art without genius, nor by genius without knowledge. The one is necessary to the other, and the success depends upon their cooperation." If we should endeavour to accommodate matters in imitation of this decision of Horace, it were easy to say, at once, that supposing two geniuses equal, one tragick and the other comick, supposing the art, likewise, equal in each, one would be as easy or difficult as the other; but this, though satisfactory in the simple question put by Horace, will not be sufficient here. Nobody can doubt but genius and industry contribute their part to every thing valuable, and particularly to good poetry. But if genius and study were to be weighed one against the other, in order to discover which must contribute most to a good work, the question would become more curious, and, perhaps, very difficult of solution. Indeed, though nature must have a great part of the expanse of poetry, yet no poetry lasts long that is not very correct: the balance, therefore, seems to incline in favour of correction. For is it not known that Virgil, with less genius than Ovid, is yet valued more by men of exquisite judgment; or, without going so far, Boileau, the Horace of our time, who composed with so much labour, and asked Molière where he found his rhyme so easily, has said; "If I write four words, I shall blot out three:" has not Boileau, by his polished lines, retouched and retouched a thousand times, gained the preference above the works of the same Molière, which are so natural, and produced by so fruitful a genius! Horace was of that opinion, for

[z] Ar. Poet. v. 407.

when he is teaching the writers of his age the art of poetry, he tells them, in plain terms, that Rome would excel in writing as in arms, if the poets were not afraid of the labour, patience, and time required to polish their pieces. He thought every poem was bad that had not been brought ten times back to the anvil, and required that a work should be kept nine years, as a child is nine months in the womb of its mother, to restrain that natural impatience which combines with sloth and self-love to disguise faults: so certain is it that correction is the touchstone of writing.

The question proposed comes back to the comparison which I have been making between genius and correction, since we are now engaged in inquiring, whether there is more or less difficulty in writing tragedy or comedy: for, as we must compare nature and study one with another, since they must both concur, more or less, to make a poet; so if we will compare the labours of two different minds in different kinds of writing, we must, with regard to the authors, compare the force of genius, and, with respect to the composition, the difficulties of the task.

The genius of the tragick and comick writer will be easily allowed to be remote from each other. Every performance, be what it will, requires a turn of mind which a man cannot confer upon himself; it is purely the gift of nature, which determines those who have it to pursue, almost in spite of themselves, the taste which predominates in their minds. Pascal found in his childhood, that he was a mathematician; and Vandyke, that he was born a painter. Sometimes this internal direction of the mind does not make such evident discoveries of itself; but it is rare to find Corneilles, who have lived long without knowing that they were poets. Corneille, having once got some notion of his powers, tried a long time, on all sides, to know what particular direction he should take. He had first made an attempt in comedy, in an age when it was yet so gross in France, that it could give no pleasure to polite persons. Melite was so well received, when he dressed her out, that she gave rise to a new species of comedy and comedians.

This success, which encouraged Corneille to pursue that sort of comedy, of which he was the first inventor, left him no reason to imagine, that he was one day to produce those masterpieces of tragedy, which his muse displayed afterwards with so much splendour; and yet less did he imagine, that his comick pieces, which, for want of any that were preferable, were then very much in fashion, would be eclipsed by another genius[a] formed upon the Greeks and Romans, and who would add to their excellencies improvements of his own, and that this modish comedy, to which Corneille, as to his idol, dedicated his labours, would quickly be forgot. He wrote first Medea, and afterwards the Cid; and, by that prodigious flight of his genius, he discovered, though late, that nature had formed him to run in no other course but that of Sophocles. Happy genius! that, without rule or imitation, could at once take so high a flight: having once, as I may say, made himself an eagle, he never afterwards quitted the path which he had worked out for himself, over the heads of the writers of his time; yet he retained some traces of the false taste which infected the whole nation; but even in this, he deserves our admiration, since, in time, he changed it completely by the reflections he made, and those he occasioned. In short, Corneille was born for tragedy, as Molière for comedy. Molière, indeed, knew his own genius sooner, and was not less happy in procuring applause, though it often happened to him as to Corneille,

> " L'ignorance et l'erreur à ses naissantes pièces,
> En habit de marquis, en robes de comtesses,
> Vinssent pour diffamer son chef-d'œuvre nouveau,
> Et secouer la tête à l'endroit le plus beau."

But, without taking any farther notice of the time at which either came to the knowledge of his own genius, let us suppose that the powers of tragedy and comedy were as equally shared between Molière and Corneille, as they are different in their own nature, and then nothing more will

[a] Molière.

remain, than to compare the several difficulties of each composition, and to rate those difficulties together which are common to both.

It appears, first, that the tragick poet has, in his subject, an advantage over the comick, for he takes it from history; and his rival, at least in the more elevated and splendid comedy, is obliged to form it by his own invention. Now, it is not so easy, as it might seem, to find comick subjects capable of a new and pleasing form; but history is a source, if not inexhaustible, yet certainly so copious as never to leave the genius aground. It is true, that invention seems to have a wider field than history: real facts are limited in their number, but the facts which may be feigned have no end; but though, in this respect, invention may be allowed to have the advantage, is the difficulty of inventing to be accounted as nothing? To make a tragedy, is to get materials together, and to make use of them like a skilful architect; but to make a comedy, is to build like Æsop in the air. It is in vain to boast that the compass of invention is as wide as the extent of desire; every thing is limited, and the mind of man like every thing else. Besides, invention must be in conformity to nature; but distinct and remarkable characters are very rare in nature herself. Molière has got hold on the principal touches of ridicule. If any man should bring characters less strong, he will be in danger of dulness. Where comedy is to be kept up by subordinate personages, it is in great danger. All the force of a picture must arise from the principal persons, and not from the multitude clustered up together. In the same manner, a comedy, to be good, must be supported by a single striking character, and not by under-parts.

But, on the contrary, tragick characters are without number, though of them the general outlines are limited; but dissimulation, jealousy, policy, ambition, desire of dominion, and other interests and passions, are various without end, and take a thousand different forms in different situations of history; so that, as long as there is tragedy, there may be always novelty. Thus the jealous and dis-

sembling Mithridates, so happily painted by Racine, will not stand in the way of a poet, who shall attempt a jealous and dissembling Tiberius. The stormy violence of an Achilles will always leave room for the stormy violence of Alexander.

But the case is very different with avarice, trifling vanity, hypocrisy, and other vices, considered as ridiculous. It would be safer to double and treble all the tragedies of our greatest poets, and use all their subjects over and over, as has been done with Œdipus and Sophonisba, than to bring again upon the stage, in five acts, a Miser, a Citizen turned gentleman, a Tartuffe, and other subjects sufficiently known. Not that these popular vices are less capable of diversification, or are less varied by different circumstances, than the vices and passions of heroes; but that if they were to be brought over again in comedies, they would be less distinct, less exact, less forcible, and, consequently, less applauded. Pleasantry and ridicule must be more strongly marked than heroism and pathos, which support themselves by their own force. Besides, though these two things, of so different natures, could support themselves equally in equal variety, which is very far from being the case, yet comedy, as it now stands, consists not in incidents, but in characters. Now it is by incidents only that characters are diversified, as well upon the stage of comedy, as upon the stage of life. Comedy, as Molière has left it, resembles the pictures of manners drawn by the celebrated La Bruyère. Would any man, after him, venture to draw them over again, he would expose himself to the fate of those who have ventured to continue them. For instance, what could we add to his character of the absent man? Shall we put him in other circumstances? The principal strokes of absence of mind will always be the same; and there are only those striking touches which are fit for a comedy, of which, the end is painting after nature, but with strength and sprightliness, like the designs of Callot. If comedy were among us what it is in Spain, a kind of romance, consisting of

many circumstances and intrigues, perplexed and disentangled, so as to surprise; if it was nearly the same with that which Corneille practised in his time; if, like that of Terence, it went no farther than to draw the common portraits of simple nature, and show us fathers, sons, and rivals; notwithstanding the uniformity, which would always prevail, as in the plays of Terence, and, probably, in those of Menander, whom he imitated in his four first pieces, there would always be a resource found, either in variety of incidents, like those of the Spaniards, or in the repetition of the same characters, in the way of Terence; but the case is now very different, the publick calls for new characters, and nothing else. Multiplicity of accidents, and the laborious contrivance of an intrigue, are not now allowed to shelter a weak genius, that would find great conveniencies in that way of writing. Nor does it suit the taste of comedy, which requires an air less constrained, and such freedom and ease of manners as admits nothing of the romantick. She leaves all the pomp of sudden events to the novels, or little romances, which were the diversion of the last age. She allows nothing but a succession of characters resembling nature, and falling in, without any apparent contrivance. Racine has, likewise, taught us to give to tragedy the same simplicity of air and action; he has endeavoured to disentangle it from that great number of incidents, which made it rather a study than diversion to the audience, and which show the poet not so much to abound in invention, as to be deficient in taste. But, notwithstanding all that he has done, or that we can do, to make it simple, it will always have the advantage over comedy in the number of its subjects, because it admits more variety of situations and events, which give variety and novelty to the characters. A miser, copied after nature, will always be the miser of Plautus or Molière; but a Nero, or a prince like Nero, will not always be the hero of Racine. Comedy admits of so little intrigue, that the miser cannot be shown in any such position as will make his picture new; but the great events of tragedy

may put Nero in such circumstances, as to make him wholly another character.

But, in the second place, over and above the subjects, may we not say something concerning the final purpose of comedy and tragedy? The purpose of the one is to divert, and the other to move; and, of these two, which is the easier? To go to the bottom of those purposes; to move is to strike those strings of the heart which are most natural, terrour and pity; to divert is to make one laugh, a thing which, indeed, is natural enough, but more delicate. The gentleman and the rustick have both sensibility and tenderness of heart, perhaps, in greater or less degree; but as they are men alike, the heart is moved by the same touches. They both love, likewise, to send their thoughts abroad, and to expand themselves in merriment; but the springs which must be touched for this purpose are not the same in the gentleman as in the rustick. The passions depend on nature, and merriment upon education. The clown will laugh at a waggery, and the gentleman only at a stroke of delicate conceit. The spectators of a tragedy, if they have but a little knowledge, are almost all on a level; but with respect to comedy we have three classes, if not more, the people, the learned, and the court. If there are certain cases in which all may be comprehended in the term people, this is not one of those cases. Whatever father Rapin may say about it, we are more willing even to admire than to laugh. Every man, that has any power of distinction, laughs as rarely as the philosopher admires; for we are not to reckon those fits of laughter which are not incited by nature, and which are given merely to complaisance, to respect, flattery, and good-humour; such as break out at sayings which pretend to smartness in assemblies. The laughter of the theatre is of another stamp. Every reader and spectator judges of wit by his own standard, and measures it by his capacity, or by his condition: the different capacities and conditions of men make them diverted on very different occasions. If, therefore, we consider the end of the tragick and comick poet, the comedian

must be involved in much more difficulties, without taking in the obstructions to be encountered equally by both, in an art which consists in raising the passions, or the mirth of a great multitude. The tragedian has little to do but to reflect upon his own thought, and draw from his heart those sentiments which will certainly make their way to the hearts of others, if he found them in his own. The other must take many forms, and change himself almost into as many persons, as he undertakes to satisfy and divert.

It may be said, that, if genius be supposed equal, and success supposed to depend upon genius, the business will be equally easy and difficult to one author and to the other. This objection is of no weight; for the same question still recurs, which is, whether of these two kinds of genius is more valuable, or more rare? If we proceed by example, and not by reasoning, we shall decide, I think, in favour of comedy.

It may be said, that, if merely art be considered, it will require deeper thoughts to form a plan just and simple; to produce happy surprises, without apparent contrivance; to carry a passion skilfully through its gradations to its height; to arrive happily to the end by always moving from it, as Ithaca seemed to fly Ulysses; to unite the acts and scenes; and to raise, by insensible degrees, a striking edifice, of which the least merit shall be exactness of proportion. It may be added, that in comedy this art is infinitely less, for there the characters come upon the stage with very little artifice or plot; the whole scheme is so connected that we see it at once, and the plan and disposition of the parts make a small part of its excellence, in comparison of a gloss of pleasantry diffused over each scene, which is more the happy effect of a lucky moment, than of long consideration.

These objections, and many others, which so fruitful a subject might easily suggest, it is not difficult to refute; and, if we were to judge by the impression made on the mind by tragedies and comedies of equal excellence, per-

haps, when we examine those impressions, it will be found that a sally of pleasantry, which diverts all the world, required more thought than a passage which gave the highest pleasure in tragedy; and, to this determination we shall be more inclined, when a closer examination shall show us, that a happy vein of tragedy is opened and effused at less expense, than a well-placed witticism in comedy has required, merely to assign its place.

It would be too much to dwell long upon such a digression; and, as I have no business to decide the question, I leave both that and my arguments to the taste of each particular reader, who will find what is to be said for or against it. My purpose was only to say of comedy, considered as a work of genius, all that a man of letters can be supposed to deliver without departing from his character, and, without palliating, in any degree, the corrupt use which has been almost always made of an exhibition, which, in its nature, might be innocent; but has been vicious from the time that it has been infected with the wickedness of men. It is not for publick exhibitions that I am now writing, but for literary inquiries. The stage is too much frequented, and books too much neglected: yet it is to the literature of Greece and Rome that we are indebted for that valuable taste, which will be insensibly lost, by the affected negligence, which now prevails, of having recourse to originals. If reason has been a considerable gainer, it must be confessed that taste has been somewhat a loser.

To return to Aristophanes. So many great men of antiquity, through a long succession of ages, down to our times, have set a value upon his works, that we cannot, naturally, suppose them contemptible, notwithstanding the essential faults with which he may be justly reproached. It is sufficient to say, that he was esteemed by Plato and Cicero; and, to conclude, by that which does him most honour, but, still, falls short of justification, the strong and sprightly eloquence of St. Chrysostom drew its support from the masculine and vigorous atticism of this sarcastick

comedian, to whom the father paid the same regard as Alexander to Homer, that of putting his works under his pillow, that he might read them, at night, before he slept, and, in the morning, as soon as he awaked.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

TO BRUMOY'S GREEK THEATRE.

1. SUMMARY OF THE FOUR ARTICLES TREATED OF IN THIS DISCOURSE.

THUS I have given a faithful extract of the remains of Aristophanes. That I have not shown them in their true form, I am not afraid that any body will complain. I have given an account of every thing, as far as it was consistent with moral decency. No pen, however cynical or heathenish, would venture to produce, in open day, the horrid passages which I have put out of sight; and, instead of regretting any part that I have suppressed, the very suppression will easily show to what degree the Athenians were infected with licentiousness of imagination, and corruption of principles. If the taste of antiquity allows us to preserve what time and barbarity have hitherto spared, religion and virtue at least oblige us not to spread it before the eyes of mankind. To end this work in an useful manner, let us examine, in a few words, the four particulars which are most striking in the eleven pieces of Aristophanes.

2. CHARACTER OF ANCIENT COMEDY.

The first is the character of the ancient comedy, which has no likeness to any thing in nature. Its genius is so wild and strange, that it scarce admits a definition. In what class of comedy must we place it? It appears, to me, to be a species of writing by itself. If we had Phrynicus, Plato, Eupolis, Cratinus, Ameipsias, and so many

other celebrated rivals of Aristophanes, of whom all that we can find are a few fragments scattered in Plutarch, Athenæus, and Suidas, we might compare them with our poet, settle the general scheme, observe the minuter differences, and form a complete notion of their comick stage. But, for want of all this, we can fix only on Aristophanes; and it is true that he may be, in some measure, sufficient to furnish a tolerable judgment of the old comedy; for, if we believe him, and who can be better credited? he was the most daring of all his brethren, the poets, who practised the same kind of writing. Upon this supposition we may conclude, that the comedy of those days consisted in an allegory drawn out and continued; an allegory never very regular, but often ingenious, and almost always carried beyond strict propriety; of satire keen and biting, but diversified, sprightly, and unexpected; so that the wound was given before it was perceived. Their points of satire were thunderbolts, and their wild figures, with their variety and quickness, had the effect of lightning. Their imitation was carried even to resemblance of persons, and their common entertainments were a parody of rival poets joined, if I may so express it, with a parody of manners and habits.

But it would be tedious to draw out to the reader that which he will already have perceived better than myself. I have no design to anticipate his reflections; and, therefore, shall only sketch the picture, which he must finish by himself: he will pursue the subject farther, and form to himself a view of the common and domestick life of the Athenians, of which this kind of comedy was a picture, with some aggravation of the features: he will bring within his view all the customs, manners, and vices, and the whole character of the people of Athens. By bringing all these together he will fix in his mind an indelible idea of a people, in whom so many contrarieties were united, and who, in a manner that can scarce be expressed, connected nobility with the cast of Athens, wisdom with madness, rage for novelty with a bigotry for antiquity, the politeness

of a monarchy with the roughness of a republick, refinement with coarseness, independence with slavery, haughtiness with servile compliance, severity of manners with debauchery, a kind of irreligion with piety. We shall do this in reading; as, in travelling through different nations, we make ourselves masters of their characters by combining their different appearances, and reflecting upon what we see.

3. THE GOVERNMENT OF THE ATHENIANS.

The government of Athens makes a fine part of the ancient comedy. In most states the mystery of government is confined within the walls of the cabinets; even in commonwealths it does not pass but through five or six heads, who rule those that think themselves the rulers. Oratory dares not touch it, and comedy still less. Cicero himself did not speak freely upon so nice a subject as the Roman commonwealth; but the Athenian eloquence was informed of the whole secret, and searches the recesses of the human mind, to fetch it out and expose it to the people. Demosthenes, and his contemporaries, speak with a freedom at which we are astonished, notwithstanding the notion we have of a popular government; yet, at what time but this did comedy adventure to claim the same rights with civil eloquence? The Italian comedy of the last age, all daring as it was, could, for its boldness, come into no competition with the ancient. It was limited to general satire, which was sometimes carried so far, that the malignity was overlooked in an attention to the wild exaggeration, the unexpected strokes, the pungent wit, and the malignity concealed under such wild flights as became the character of harlequin. But though it so far resembled Aristophanes, our age is yet at a great distance from his, and the Italian comedy from his scenes. But with respect to the liberty of censuring the government, there can be no comparison made of one age or comedy with another. Aristophanes is the only writer of his kind, and is, for that reason, of the highest value. A powerful state, set at the

head of Greece, is the subject of his merriment, and that merriment is allowed by the state itself. This appears to us an inconsistency; but it is true that it was the interest of the state to allow it, though not always without inconveniency. It was a restraint upon the ambition and tyranny of single men, a matter of great importance to a people so very jealous of their liberty. Cleon, Alcibiades, Lamachus, and many other generals and magistrates were kept under by fear of the comick strokes of a poet so little cautious as Aristophanes. He was once, indeed, in danger of paying dear for his wit. He professed, as he tells us himself, to be of great use by his writings to the state; and rated his merit so high as to complain that he was not rewarded. But, under pretence of this publick spirit, he spared no part of the publick conduct; neither was government, councils, revenues, popular assemblies, secret proceedings in judicature, choice of ministers, the government of the nobles, or that of the people, spared.

The Acharnians, the Peace, and the Birds, are eternal monuments of the boldness of the poet, who was not afraid of censuring the government for the obstinate continuance of a ruinous war, for undertaking new ones, and feeding itself with wild imaginations, and running to destruction, as it did, for an idle point of honour.

Nothing can be more reproachful to the Athenians than his play of the Knights, where he represents, under an allegory, that may be easily seen through, the nation of the Athenians, as an old doting fellow tricked by a new man, such as Cleon and his companions, who were of the same stamp.

A single glance upon Lysistrata, and the Female Orators, must raise astonishment, when the Athenian policy is set below the schemes of women, whom the author makes ridiculous, for no other reason than, to bring contempt upon their husbands, who held the helm of government.

The Wasps is written to expose the madness of the people for lawsuits and litigations; and a multitude of iniquities are laid open.

It may easily be gathered, that, notwithstanding the wise laws of Solon, which they still professed to follow, the government was falling into decay, for we are not to understand the jest of Aristophanes in the literal sense. It is plain that the corruption, though we should suppose it but half as much as we are told, was very great, for it ended in the destruction of Athens, which could scarce raise its head again, after it had been taken by Lysander. Though we consider Aristophanes, as a comick writer who deals in exaggeration, and bring down his stories to their true standard, we still find that the fundamentals of their government fail in almost all the essential points. That the people were inveigled by men of ambition; that all councils and decrees had their original in factious combinations; that avarice and private interest animated all their policy to the hurt of the publick; that their revenues were ill managed, their allies improperly treated; that their good citizens were sacrificed, and the bad put in places; that a mad eagerness for judicial litigation took up all their attention within, and that war was made without, not so much with wisdom and precaution, as with temerity and good-luck; that the love of novelty and fashion, in the manner of managing the publick affairs, was a madness universally prevalent; and that, as Melanthius says in Plutarch, the republick of Athens was continued only by the perpetual discord of those that managed its affairs. This remedied the dishonour by preserving the equilibrium, and was kept always in action by eloquence and comedy.

This is what, in general, may be drawn from the reading Aristophanes. The sagacity of the readers will go farther; they will compare the different forms of government, by which that tumultuous people endeavoured to regulate or increase the democracy, which forms were all fatal to the state, because they were not built upon lasting foundations, and had all in them the principles of destruction. A strange contrivance it was to perpetuate a state, by changing the just proportion which Solon had wisely settled between the nobles and the people, and by opening

a gate to the skilful ambition of those who had art or courage enough to force themselves into the government by means of the people, whom they flattered with protections, that they might more certainly crush them.

4. THE TRAGICK POETS RALLIED.

Another part of the works of Aristophanes, are his pleasant reflections upon the most celebrated poets. The shafts which he lets fly at the three heroes of tragedy, and particularly at Euripides, might incline the reader to believe that he had little esteem for those great men, and that, probably, the spectators that applauded him were of his opinion. This conclusion would not be just, as I have already shown by arguments, which, if I had not offered them, the reader might have discovered better than I. But, that I may leave no room for objections, and prevent any shadow of captiousness, I shall venture to observe, that posterity will not consider Racine as less a master of the French stage, because his plays were ridiculed by parodies. Parody always fixes upon the best pieces, and was more to the taste of the Greeks than to ours. At present, the high theatres give it up to stages of inferiour rank; but in Athens the comick theatre considered parody as its principal ornament, for a reason which is worth examining. The ancient comedy was not, like ours, a remote and delicate imitation; it was the art of gross mimickry, and would have been supposed to have missed its aim, had it not copied the mien, the walk, the dress, the motions of the face of those whom it exhibited. Now parody is an imitation of this kind; it is a change of serious to burlesque, by a slight variation of words, inflection of voice, or an imperceptible art of mimickry. Parody is to poetry, as a masque to a face. As the tragedies of Eschylus, of Sophocles, and of Euripides were much in fashion, and were known by memory to the people, the parodies upon them would naturally strike and please, when they were accompanied by the grimaces of a good comedian, who mimicked with archness a serious character. Such is the malignity of

human nature; we love to laugh at those whom we esteem most, and by this make ourselves some recompense for the unwilling homage which we pay to merit. The parodies upon these poets, made by Aristophanes, ought to be considered rather as encomiums than satires. They give us occasion to examine whether the criticisms are just or not in themselves; but, what is more important, they afford no proof that Euripides, or his predecessors, wanted the esteem of Aristophanes or his age. The statues raised to their honour, the respect paid by the Athenians to their writings, and the careful preservation of those writings themselves, are immortal testimonies in their favour, and make it unnecessary for me to stop any longer upon so plausible a solution of so frivolous an objection.

5. FREQUENT RIDICULE OF THE GODS.

The most troublesome difficulty, and that which, so far as I know, has not yet been cleared to satisfaction, is the contemptuous manner in which Aristophanes treats the gods. Though I am persuaded, in my own mind, that I have found the true solution of this question, I am not sure that it will make more impression than that of M. Boivin, who contents himself with saying, that every thing was allowed to the comick poets; and that even atheism was permitted to the licentiousness of the stage; that the Athenians applauded all that made them laugh; and believed that Jupiter himself laughed with them at the smart sayings of a poet. Mr. Collier[b], an Englishman, in his remarks upon their stage, attempts to prove that Aristophanes was an open atheist. For my part, I am not satisfied with the account either of one or the other, and think it better to venture a new system, of which I have already dropped some hints in this work. The truth is, that the Athenians professed to be great laughers, always ready for merriment on whatever subject. But it cannot be con-

[b] View of the immorality and profaneness of the English stage, by Jeremy Collier. 1698.—Ed.

ceived that Aristophanes should, without punishment, publish himself an atheist, unless we suppose that atheism was the opinion, likewise, of the spectators, and of the judges commissioned to examine the plays; and yet this cannot be suspected of those who boasted themselves the most religious nation, and, naturally, the most superstitious of all Greece. How can we suppose those to be atheists who passed sentence upon Diagoras, Socrates, and Alcibiades for impiety! These are glaring inconsistencies. To say, like M. Boivin, for sake of getting clear of the difficulty, that Alcibiades, Socrates, and Diagoras attacked religion seriously, and were, therefore, not allowed, but that Aristophanes did it in jest, or was authorized by custom, would be to trifle with the difficulty, and not to clear it. Though the Athenians loved merriment, it is not likely that, if Aristophanes had professed atheism, they would have spared him more than Socrates, who had as much life and pleasantry in his discourses, as the poet in his comedies. The pungent raillery of Aristophanes, and the fondness of the Athenians for it, are, therefore, not the true reason why the poet was spared, when Socrates was condemned. I shall now solve the question with great brevity.

The true answer to this question is given by Plutarch in his treatise of reading of the poets. Plutarch attempts to prove, that youth is not to be prohibited the reading of the poets, but to be cautioned against such parts as may have bad effects. They are first to be prepossessed with this leading principle, that poetry is false and fabulous. He then enumerates, at length, the fables which Homer and other poets have invented about their deities, and concludes thus: "When, therefore, there is found in poetical compositions any thing strange and shocking, with respect to gods or demi-gods, or concerning the virtue of any excellent and renowned characters, he that should receive these fictions as truth, would be corrupted by an erroneous opinion; but he that always keeps in his mind the fables and allusions, which it is the business of poetry to

contrive, will not be injured by these stories, nor receive any ill impressions upon his thoughts, but will be ready to censure himself, if, at any time, he happens to be afraid, lest Neptune, in his rage, should split the earth, and lay open the infernal regions." Some pages afterwards, he tells us, "that religion is a thing difficult of comprehension, and above the understanding of poets; which it is," says he, "necessary to have in mind when we read their fables."

The pagans, therefore, had their fables, which they distinguished from their religion; for no one can be persuaded that Ovid intended his Metamorphoses, as a true representation of the religion of the Romans. The poets were allowed their imaginations about their gods, as things which have no regard to the publick worship. Upon this principle, I say, as I said before, there was, amongst the pagans, two sorts of religion; one a poetical, and the other a real religion; one practical, the other theatrical; a mythology for the poets, a theology for use. They had fables, and a worship, which, though founded upon fable, was yet very different.

Diagoras, Socrates, Plato, and the philosophers of Athens, with Cicero, their admirer, and the other pretended wise men of Rome are men by themselves. These were the atheists with respect to the ancients. We must not, therefore, look into Plato, or into Cicero, for the real religion of the pagans, as distinct from the fabulous. These two authors involve themselves in the clouds, that their opinions may not be discovered. They durst not openly attack the real religion; but destroyed it by attacking fable.

To distinguish here, with exactness, the agreement or difference between fable and religion, is not, at present, my intention. It is not easy[c] to show, with exactness, what was the Athenian notion of the nature of the gods whom they worshipped. Plutarch himself tells us, that this was a thing very difficult for the philosophers. It is sufficient for

[c] See St. Paul, upon the subject of the Ignoto Deo.

me that the mythology and theology of the ancients were different at the bottom; that the names of the gods continued the same; and that long custom gave up one to the caprices of the poets, without supposing the other affected by them. This being once settled upon the authority of the ancients themselves, I am no longer surprised to see Jupiter, Minerva, Neptune, Bacchus, appear upon the stage in the comedy of Aristophanes, and, at the same time, receiving incense in the temples of Athens. This is, in my opinion, the most reasonable account of a thing so obscure; and I am ready to give up my system to any other, by which the Athenians shall be made more consistent with themselves; those Athenians who sat laughing at the gods of Aristophanes, while they condemned Socrates for having appeared to despise the gods of his country.

6. THE MIMI AND PANTOMIMES.

A word is now to be spoken of the *mimi*, which had some relation to comedy. This appellation was, by the Greeks and Romans, given to certain dramatick performances, and to the actors that played them. The denomination sufficiently shows, that their art consisted in imitation and buffoonery. Of their works, nothing, or very little, is remaining; so that they can only be considered, by the help of some passages in authors, from which little is to be learned that deserves consideration. I shall extract the substance, as I did with respect to the chorus, without losing time, by defining all the different species, or producing all the quotations, which would give the reader more trouble than instruction. He that desires fuller instructions may read Vossius, Valois, Saumaises, and Gataker, of whose compilations, however learned, I should think it shame to be the author.

The mimi had their original from comedy, of which, at its first appearance, they made a part; for their mimick actors always played and exhibited grotesque dances in the comedies. The jealousy of rivalship afterwards broke

them off from the comick actors, and made them a company by themselves. But to secure their reception, they borrowed from comedy all its drollery, wildness, grossness, and licentiousness. This amusement they added to their dances, and they produced what are now called farces, or burlettas. These farces had not the regularity or delicacy of comedies; they were only a succession of single scenes, contrived to raise laughter, formed or unravelled without order, and without connexion. They had no other end but to make the people laugh. Now and then there might be good sentences, like the sentences of P. Syrus, that are yet left us, but the groundwork was low comedy, and any thing of greater dignity drops in by chance. We must, however, imagine, that this odd species of the drama rose, at length, to somewhat a higher character, since we are told that Plato, the philosopher, laid the mimi of Sophron under his pillow, and they were found there after his death. But in general we may say, with truth, that it always discovered the meanness of its original, like a false pretension to nobility, in which the cheat is always discovered, through the concealment of fictitious splendour.

These mimi were of two sorts, of which the length was different, but the purposes the same. The mimi of one species were short; those of the other long, and not quite so grotesque. These two kinds were subdivided into many species, distinguished by the dresses and characters, such as show drunkards, physicians, men, and women.

Thus far of the Greeks. The Romans, having borrowed of them the more noble shows of tragedy and comedy, were not content till they had their rhapsodies. They had their *planipedes*, who played with flat soles, that they might have the more agility; and their *sannions*, whose head was shaved, that they might box the better. There is no need of naming here all who had a name for these diversions among the Greeks and Romans. I have said enough, and, perhaps, too much of this abortion of comedy, which drew upon itself the contempt of good men, the censures of

the magistrates, and the indignation of the fathers of the church[d].

Another set of players were called pantomimes: these were, at least, so far preferable to the former, that they gave no offence to the ears. They spoke only to the eyes; but with such art of expression, that, without the utterance of a single word, they represented, as we are told, a complete tragedy or comedy, in the same manner as dumb harlequin is exhibited on our theatres. These pantomimes, among the Greeks, first mingled singing with their dances; afterwards, about the time of Livius Andronicus, the songs were performed by one part, and the dances by another. Afterwards, in the time of Augustus, when they were sent for to Rome, for the diversions of the people, whom he had enslaved, they played comedies without songs or vocal utterance, but by the sprightliness, activity, and efficacy of their gestures; or, as Sidonius Apollinaris expresses it, "clausis faucibus, et loquente gestu." They not only exhibited things and passions, but even the most delicate distinctions of passions, and the slightest circumstances of facts. We must not, however, imagine, at least, in my opinion, that the pantomimes did literally represent regular tragedies or comedies by the mere motions of their bodies. We may justly determine, notwithstanding all their agility, their representations would, at last, be very incomplete: yet we may suppose, with good reason, that their action was very lively, and that the art of imitation went great lengths, since it raised the admiration of the wisest men, and made the people mad with eagerness. Yet, when we read that one Hylas, the pupil of one Pylades, in the time of Augustus, divided the applauses of the people with his master, when they represented Œdipus; or when Juvenal tells us, that Bathillus played Leda, and other things of

[d] It is the licentiousness of the mimi and pantomimes, against which the censure of the holy fathers particularly breaks out, as against a thing irregular and indecent, without supposing it much connected with the cause of religion.

the same kind, it is not easy to believe that a single man, without speaking a word, could exhibit tragedies or comedies, and make starts and bounds supply the place of vocal articulation. Notwithstanding the obscurity of this whole matter, one may know what to admit as certain, or how far a representation could be carried by dance, posture and grimace. Among these artificial dances, of which we know nothing but the names, there was, as early as the time of Aristophanes, some extremely indecent. These were continued in Italy from the time of Augustus, long after the emperours. It was a publick mischief, which contributed, in some measure, to the decay and ruin of the Roman empire. To have a due detestation of those licentious entertainments, there is no need of any recourse to the fathers; the wiser pagans tell us, very plainly, what they thought of them. I have made this mention of the mimi and pantomimes, only to show how the most noble of publick spectacles were corrupted and abused, and to conduct the reader to the end through every road, and through all the by-paths of human wit, from Homer and Eschylus to our own time.

7. WANDERINGS OF THE HUMAN MIND IN THE BIRTH, AND PROGRESS OF THEATRICAL REPRESENTATIONS.

That we may conclude this work by applying the principles laid down at the beginning, and extended through the whole, I desire the reader to recur to that point, where I have represented the human mind as beginning the course of the drama. The chorus was first a hymn to Bacchus, produced by accident; art brought it to perfection, and delight made it a publick diversion. Thespis made a single actor play before the people; this was the beginning of theatrical shows. Eschylus, taking the idea of the Iliad and Odyssey, animates, if I may so express it, the epick poem, and gives a dialogue in place of simple recitation; puts the whole into action, and sets it before the eyes, as if it was a present and real transaction; he gives the

chorus[e] an interest in the scenes; contrives habits of dignity and theatrical decorations: in a word, he gives both to Tragedy; or, more properly, draws it from the bosom of the epick poem. She made her appearance, sparkling with graces, and displayed such majesty, as gained every heart at the first view. Sophocles considers her more nearly, with the eyes of a critick, and finds that she has something still about her rough and swelling; he divests her of her false ornaments; teaches her a more regular walk, and more familiar dignity. Euripides was of opinion, that she ought to receive still more softness and tenderness; he teaches her the new art of pleasing by simplicity, and gives her the charms of graceful negligence; so that he makes her stand in suspense, whether she appears most to advantage in the dress of Sophocles, sparkling with gems, or in that of Euripides, which is more simple and modest. Both, indeed, are elegant; but the elegance is of different kinds, between which no judgment, as yet, has decided the prize of superiority.

We can now trace it no farther; its progress amongst the Greeks is out of sight. We must pass at once to the time of Augustus, when Apollo and the Muses quitted their ancient residence in Greece, to fix their abode in Italy. But it is vain to ask questions of Melpomene; she is obstinately silent, and we only know, from strangers, her power amongst the Romans. Seneca endeavours to make her speak; but the gaudy show, with which he rather loads than adorns her, makes us think, that he took some phantom of Melpomene for the Muse herself.

Another flight, equally rapid with that to Rome, must carry us through thousands of years, from Rome to France. There, in the time of Lewis the fourteenth, we see the mind of man giving birth to tragedy a second time, as if the Greek tragedy had been utterly forgot. In the place of

[e] Eschylus, in my opinion, as well as the other poets, his contemporaries, retained the chorus, not merely because it was the fashion, but because, examining tragedy to the bottom, they found it not rational to conceive, that an action, great and splendid, like the revolution of a state, could pass without witnesses.

Eschylus, we have our Rotrou; in Corneille, we have another Sophocles; and in Racine, a second Euripides. Thus is Tragedy raised from her ashes, carried to the utmost point of greatness, and so dazzling, that she prefers herself to herself. Surprised to see herself produced again in France, in so short a time, and nearly in the same manner as before in Greece, she is disposed to believe that her fate is to make a short transition from her birth to her perfection, like the goddess that issued from the brain of Jupiter.

If we look back on the other side, to the rise of Comedy, we shall see her hatched from the Margites, or from the Odyssey of Homer, the imitation of her eldest sister; but we see her, under the conduct of Aristophanes, become licentious and petulant, taking airs to herself, which the magistrates were obliged to crush. Menander reduced her to bounds, taught her, at once, gaiety and politeness, and enabled her to correct vice, without shocking the offenders. Plautus, among the Romans, to whom we must now pass, united the earlier and the later comedy, and joined buffoonery with delicacy. Terence, who was better instructed, received comedy from Menander, and surpassed his original, as he endeavoured to copy it. And lastly, Molière produced a new species of comedy, which must be placed in a class by itself, in opposition to that of Aristophanes, whose manner is, likewise, peculiar to himself.

But such is the weakness of the human mind, that, when we review the successions of the drama a third time, we find genius falling from its height, forgetting itself, and led astray by the love of novelty, and the desire of striking out new paths. Tragedy degenerated, in Greece, from the time of Aristotle, and, in Rome, after Augustus. At Rome and Athens, comedy produced mimi, pantomimes, burlettas, tricks, and farces, for the sake of variety; such is the character, and such the madness of the mind of man. It is satisfied with having made great conquests, and gives them up to attempt others which are far from answering its expectation, and only enable it to

discover its own folly, weakness and deviations. But, why should we be tired with standing still at the true point of perfection, when it is attained? If eloquence be wearied, and forgets herself awhile, yet she soon returns to her former point: so will it happen to our theatres, if the French Muses will keep the Greek models in their view, and not look, with disdain, upon a stage, whose mother is nature, whose soul is passion, and whose art is simplicity: a stage, which, to speak the truth, does not, perhaps, equal ours in splendour and elevation, but which excels it in simplicity and propriety, and equals it, at least, in the conduct and direction of those passions, which may properly affect an honest man and a christian.

For my part, I shall think myself well recompensed for my labour, and shall attain the end which I had in view, if I shall, in some little measure, revive in the minds of those, who purpose to run the round of polite literature, not an immoderate and blind reverence, but a true taste of antiquity: such a taste, as both feeds and polishes the mind, and enriches it, by enabling it to appropriate the wealth of foreigners, and to exert its natural fertility in exquisite productions; such a taste as gave the Racines, the Molières, the Boileaus, the Fontaines, the Patrus, the Pelissons, and many other great geniuses of the last age, all that they were, and all that they will always be; such a taste, as puts the seal of immortality to those works in which it is discovered; a taste, so necessary, that, without it, we may be certain, that the greatest powers of nature will long continue in a state below themselves; for no man ought to allow himself to be flattered or seduced, by the example of some men of genius, who have rather appeared to despise this taste, than to despise it in reality. It is true, that excellent originals have given occasion, without any fault of their own, to very bad copies. No man ought severely to ape either the ancients or the moderns; but, if it was necessary, to run into an extreme of one side or the other, which is never done by a judicious and well-directed mind, it would be better for a wit, as for a painter, to

enrich himself by what he can take from the ancients, than to grow poor by taking all from his own stock; or openly to affect an imitation of those moderns, whose more fertile genius has produced beauties, peculiar to themselves, and which themselves only can display with grace: beauties of that peculiar kind, that they are not fit to be imitated by others; though, in those who first invented them, they may be justly esteemed, and in them only[f].

DEDICATIONS.

Dr. James's Medicinal Dictionary, 3 vols. folio. 1743.

To Dr. Mead.

SIR,

THAT the Medicinal Dictionary is dedicated to you, is to be imputed only to your reputation for superiour skill in those sciences, which I have endeavoured to explain and facilitate; and you are, therefore, to consider this address, if it be agreeable to you, as one of the rewards of merit; and, if otherwise, as one of the inconveniencies of eminence.

However you shall receive it, my design cannot be disappointed; because this publick appeal to your judgment will show, that I do not found my hopes of approbation upon the ignorance of my readers, and that I fear his censure least, whose knowledge is most extensive.

I am, Sir,

Your most obedient, humble servant,

R. JAMES.

[f] Much light has been thrown on the Greek drama since the labours of Dr. Johnson, and the père Brumoy. The papers on the subject, in Cumberland's Observer, Schlegel's Lectures on Dramatic Literature, Mr. Mitchell's Dissertations, in his translation of Aristophanes, and the essays on the Greek Orators and Dramatists, in the Quarterly Review, may be mentioned as among the most popular attempts to illustrate this pleasing department of the Belles-Lettres.—ED.

The Female Quixote. By Mrs. Lennox. 1752.

To the right hon. the earl of Middlesex.

MY LORD,

SUCH is the power of interest over almost every mind, that no one is long without arguments to prove any position which is ardently wished to be true, or to justify any measures which are dictated by inclination.

By this subtile sophistry of desire, I have been persuaded to hope that this book may, without impropriety, be inscribed to your lordship; but am not certain, that my reasons will have the same force upon other understandings.

The dread which a writer feels of the publick censure; the still greater dread of neglect; and the eager wish for support and protection, which is impressed by the consciousness of imbecility, are unknown to those who have never adventured into the world; and, I am afraid, my lord, equally unknown to those who have always found the world ready to applaud them.

It is, therefore, not unlikely that the design of this address may be mistaken, and the effects of my fear imputed to my vanity. They, who see your lordship's name prefixed to my performance, will rather condemn my presumption than compassionate my anxiety.

But, whatever be supposed my motive, the praise of judgment cannot be denied me; for, to whom can timidity so properly fly for shelter, as to him who has been so long distinguished for candour and humanity? How can vanity be so completely gratified, as by the allowed patronage of him, whose judgment has so long given a standard to the national taste! Or by what other means could I so powerfully suppress all opposition, but that of envy, as by declaring myself,

My lord,
Your lordship's obliged and
most obedient servant,
THE AUTHOR.

Shakespeare Illustrated; or, the Novels and Histories on which the plays of Shakespeare are founded; collected and translated from the original authors. With Critical Remarks. By the author of the Female Quixote. 1753.

To the right hon. John, earl of Orrery.

MY LORD,

I HAVE no other pretence to the honour of a patronage so illustrious as that of your lordship, than the merit of attempting what has, by some unaccountable neglect, been hitherto omitted, though absolutely necessary to a perfect knowledge of the abilities of Shakespeare.

Among the powers that most conduce to constitute a poet, the first and most valuable is invention; the highest seems to be that which is able to produce a series of events. It is easy, when the thread of a story is once drawn, to diversify it with variety of colours; and when a train of action is presented to the mind, a little acquaintance with life will supply circumstances and reflections, and a little knowledge of books furnish parallels and illustrations. To tell over again a story that has been told already, and to tell it better than the first author, is no rare qualification: but to strike out the first hints of a new fable; hence, to introduce a set of characters so diversified in their several passions and interests, that from the clashing of this variety may result many necessary incidents; to make these incidents surprising, and yet natural, so as to delight the imagination, without shocking the judgment of a reader; and, finally, to wind up the whole in a pleasing catastrophe, produced by those very means which seem most likely to oppose and prevent it, is the utmost effort of the human mind.

To discover how few of those writers, who profess to recount imaginary adventures, have been able to produce any thing by their own imagination, would require too much of that time which your lordship employs in nobler studies. Of all the novels and romances that wit or idleness, vanity or indigence, have pushed into the world, there

are very few of which the end cannot be conjectured from the beginning; or where the authors have done more than to transpose the incidents of other tales, or strip the circumstances from one event for the decoration of another.

In the examination of a poet's character, it is, therefore, first to be inquired, what degree of invention has been exerted by him. With this view, I have very diligently read the works of Shakespeare, and now presume to lay the result of my researches before your lordship, before that judge whom Pliny himself would have wished for his assessor to hear a literary cause.

How much the translation of the following novels will add to the reputation of Shakespeare, or take away from it, you my lord, and men learned and candid like you, if any such can be found, must now determine. Some danger, I am informed, there is, lest his admirers should think him injured by this attempt, and clamour, as at the diminution of the honour of that nation, which boasts itself the parent of so great a poet.

That no such enemies may arise against me, though I am unwilling to believe it, I am far from being too confident, for who can fix bounds to bigotry and folly? My sex, my age, have not given me many opportunities of mingling in the world. There may be in it many a species of absurdity which I have never seen, and, among them, such vanity as pleases itself with false praise bestowed on another, and such superstition as worships idols, without supposing them to be gods.

But the truth is, that a very small part of the reputation of this mighty genius depends upon the naked plot or story of his plays. He lived in an age, when the books of chivalry were yet popular, and when, therefore, the minds of his auditors were not accustomed to balance probabilities, or to examine nicely the proportion between causes and effects. It was sufficient to recommend a story, that it was far removed from common life, that its changes were frequent, and its close pathetick.

This disposition of the age concurred so happily with the imagination of Shakespeare, that he had no desire to reform it; and, indeed, to this he was indebted for the licentious variety, by which he made his plays more entertaining than those of any other author.

He had looked, with great attention, on the scenes of nature; but his chief skill was in human actions, passions, and habits; he was, therefore, delighted with such tales as afforded numerous incidents, and exhibited many characters in many changes of situation. These characters are so copiously diversified, and some of them so justly pursued, that his works may be considered, as a map of life, a faithful miniature of human transactions; and he that has read Shakespeare, with attention, will, perhaps, find little new in the crowded world.

Among his other excellencies, it ought to be remarked, because it has hitherto been unnoticed, that his heroes are men; that the love and hatred, the hopes and fears of his chief personages, are such as are common to other human beings, and not, like those which later times have exhibited, peculiar to phantoms that strut upon the stage[g].

It is not, perhaps, very necessary to inquire whether the vehicle of so much delight and instruction, be a story probable or unlikely, native or foreign. Shakespeare's excellence is not the fiction of a tale, but the representation of life; and his reputation is, therefore, safe, till human nature shall be changed. Nor can he, who has so many just claims to praise, suffer by losing that which ignorant admiration has unreasonably given him. To calumniate the dead is baseness, and to flatter them is surely folly.

From flattery, my lord, either of the dead or the living, I wish to be clear, and have, therefore, solicited the countenance of a patron, whom, if I knew how to praise him, I could praise with truth, and have the world on my side; whose candour and humanity are universally acknow-

[g] See preface to Shakespeare.

ledged, and whose judgment, perhaps, was then first to be doubted, when he condescended to admit this address from,

My lord,
Your lordship's most obliged,
and most obedient, humble servant,
THE AUTHOR.

Payne's Introduction to the Game of Draughts. 1756.

To the right hon. William Henry, earl of Rochford, &c.

MY LORD,

WHEN I take the liberty of addressing to your lordship a treatise on the game of draughts, I easily foresee, that I shall be in danger of suffering ridicule on one part, while I am gaining honour on the other; and that many, who may envy me the distinction of approaching you, will deride the present I presume to offer.

Had I considered this little volume, as having no purpose beyond that of teaching a game, I should, indeed, have left it to take its fate without a patron. Triflers may find or make any thing a trifle; but, since it is the great characteristick of a wise man to see events in their causes, to obviate consequences, and ascertain contingencies, your lordship will think nothing a trifle, by which the mind is inured to caution, foresight, and circumspection. The same skill, and often the same degree of skill, is exerted in great and little things; and your lordship may, sometimes, exercise, on a harmless game[h], those abilities which have been so happily employed in the service of your country.

I am, my lord,
Your lordship's most obliged, most obedient,
and most humble servant,
WILLIAM PAYNE.

[h] The game of draughts, we know, is peculiarly calculated to fix the attention, without straining it. There is a composure and gravity in draughts,

The Evangelical History of Jesus Christ harmonized, explained and illustrated[1]. 2 vols. 8vo. 1758.[1]

To the lords spiritual and temporal, and commons in parliament assembled.

THAT we are fallen upon an age in which corruption is barely not universal, is universally confessed. Venality sculks no longer in the dark, but snatches the bribe in publick; and prostitution issues forth without shame, glittering with the ornaments of successful wickedness. Rapine preys on the publick without opposition, and perjury betrays it without inquiry. Irreligion is not only avowed, but boasted; and the pestilence that used to walk in darkness, is now destroying at noonday.

Shall this be the state of the English nation; and shall her lawgivers behold it without regard? Must the torrent continue to roll on, till it shall sweep us into the gulf of perdition? Surely there will come a time, when the careless shall be frighted, and the sluggish shall be roused; when every passion shall be put upon the guard by the dread of general depravity; when he who laughs at wickedness in his companion, shall start from it in his child; when the man who fears not for his soul, shall tremble for his possessions; when it shall be discovered that religion only can secure the rich from robbery, and

which insensibly tranquillises the mind; and, accordingly, the Dutch are fond of it, as they are of smoking, of the sedative influence of which, though he himself (Dr. Johnson) never smoked, he had a high opinion.—Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides. 3rd edit. p. 48.

[1] The dedication to this work has been so confidently attributed to Dr. Johnson, and so constantly inserted among his productions, that it is given in the present edition. But Mr. Boswell was of opinion, that it was not Johnson's composition. "He was no *croaker*," observes his friendly biographer, "no declaimer against the *times*. He would not have written, 'That we are fallen upon an age, in which corruption is not barely universal, is universally confessed.' Nor, 'rapine preys on the publick without opposition, and perjury betrays it without injury.' Nor would he, to excite a speedy reformation, have conjured up such phantoms as these: 'A few years longer, and, perhaps, all endeavours will be in vain. We may be swallowed by an earthquake, we may be delivered to our enemies.'" "This is not Johnsonian," is Mr. Boswell's inference. iv. p. 423. note.—Ed.

the poor from oppression; can defend the state from treachery, and the throne from assassination.

If this time be ever to come, let it come quickly: a few years longer, and, perhaps, all endeavours will be vain: we may be swallowed by an earthquake; we may be delivered to our enemies, or abandoned to that discord, which must inevitably prevail among men that have lost all sense of divine superintendence, and have no higher motive of action or forbearance, than present opinion of present interest.

It is the duty of private men to supplicate and propose; it is yours to hear and to do right. Let religion be once more restored, and the nation shall once more be great and happy. This consequence is not far distant: that nation must always be powerful, where every man performs his duty; and every man will perform his duty, that considers himself, as a being whose condition is to be settled to all eternity by the laws of Christ.

The only doctrine by which man can be made "wise unto salvation," is the will of God, revealed in the books of the Old and the New Testament.

To study the scriptures, therefore, according to his abilities and attainments, is every man's duty; and to facilitate that study, to those whom nature hath made weak, or education has left ignorant, or indispensable cares detain from regular processes of inquiry, is the business of those who have been blessed with abilities and learning, and are appointed the instructers of the lower classes of men, by that common Father, who distributes to all created beings their qualifications and employments; who has allotted some to the labour of the hand, and some to the exercise of the mind; has commanded some to teach, and others to learn; has prescribed to some the patience of instruction, and to others the meekness of obedience.

By what methods the unenlightened and ignorant may be made proper readers of the word of God, has been long and diligently considered. Commentaries of all kinds have, indeed, been copiously produced; but there still

remain multitudes to whom the labours of the learned are of little use, for whom expositions require an expositor. To those, indeed, who read the divine books, without vain curiosity, or a desire to be wise beyond their powers, it will always be easy to discern the straight path, to find the words of everlasting life. But such is the condition of our nature, that we are always attempting what is difficult to perform: he who reads the scripture to gain goodness, is desirous, likewise, to gain knowledge, and by his impatience of ignorance, falls into errour.

This danger has appeared to the doctors of the Romish church, so much to be feared, and so difficult to be escaped, that they have snatched the bible out of the hands of the people, and confined the liberty of perusing it to those whom literature has previously qualified. By this expedient they have formed a kind of uniformity, I am afraid, too much like that of colours in the dark; but they have, certainly, usurped a power which God has never given them, and precluded great numbers from the highest spiritual consolation.

I know not whether this prohibition has not brought upon them an evil which they themselves have not discovered. It is granted, I believe, by the Romanists themselves, that the best commentaries on the bible have been the works of protestants. I know not, indeed, whether, since the celebrated paraphrase of Erasmus, any scholar has appeared amongst them, whose works are much valued, even in his own communion. Why have those who excel in every other kind of knowledge, to whom the world owes much of the increase of light, which has shone upon these latter ages, failed, and failed only, when they have attempted to explain the scriptures of God? Why, but, because they are in the church less read, and less examined; because they have another rule of deciding controversies and instituting laws.

Of the bible, some of the books are prophetical; some doctrinal and historical, as the gospels, of which we have, in the subsequent pages, attempted an illustration. The

books of the evangelists contain an account of the life of our blessed Saviour, more particularly of the years of his ministry, interspersed with his precepts, doctrines, and predictions. Each of these histories contains facts, and dictates related, likewise, in the rest, that the truth might be established by concurrence of testimony; and each has, likewise, facts and dictates which the rest omit, to prove that they were wrote without communication.

These writers, not affecting the exactness of chronologers, and, relating various events of the same life, or the same events with various circumstances, have some difficulties to him, who, without the help of many books, desires to collect a series of the acts and precepts of Jesus Christ; fully to know his life, whose example was given for our imitation; fully to understand his precepts, which it is sure destruction to disobey.

In this work, therefore, an attempt has been made, by the help of harmonists and expositors, to reduce the four gospels into one series of narration; to form a complete history out of the different narratives of the evangelists, by inserting every event in the order of time, and connecting every precept of life and doctrine, with the occasion on which it was delivered; showing, as far as history or the knowledge of ancient customs can inform us, the reason and propriety of every action; and explaining, or endeavouring to explain, every precept and declaration in its true meaning.

Let it not be hastily concluded, that we intend to substitute this book for the gospels, or to obtrude our own expositions as the oracles of God. We recommend to the unlearned reader to consult us, when he finds any difficulty, as men who have laboured not to deceive ourselves, and who are without any temptation to deceive him; but as men, however, that, while they mean best, may be mistaken. Let him be careful, therefore, to distinguish what we cite from the gospels, from what we offer as our own: he will find many difficulties removed; and, if some yet remain, let him remember that, "God is in heaven and we

upon earth," that, " our thoughts are not God's thoughts," and that the great cure of doubt is an humble mind[k].

Angell's Stenography, or Shorthand improved. 1758.

To the most noble Charles duke of Richmond, Lennox, Aubigny, &c.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR GRACE,

THE improvement of arts and sciences has always been esteemed laudable: and, in proportion to their utility and advantage to mankind, they have generally gained the patronage of persons the most distinguished for birth, learning, and reputation in the world. This is an art, undoubtedly, of publick utility, and which has been cultivated by persons of distinguished abilities, as will appear from its history. But, as most of their systems have been defective, clogged with a multiplicity of rules, and perplexed by arbitrary, intricate, and impracticable schemes, I have endeavoured to rectify their defects, to adapt it to all capacities, and render it of general, lasting, and extensive benefit. How this is effected the following plates will sufficiently explain, to which I have prefixed a suitable introduction, and a concise and impartial history of the origin and progressive improvements of this art. And, as I have submitted the whole to the inspection of accurate judges, whose approbation I am honoured with, I most humbly crave leave to publish it to the world, under your grace's patronage: not merely on account of your great dignity and high rank in life, though these receive a lustre from your grace's humanity; but also from a knowledge of your grace's disposition to encourage every useful art, and favour all true promoters of science. That your grace may long live the friend of learning, the guardian of liberty, and the patron of virtue, and then transmit your

[k] " My doctrine is not mine," said the Divine Founder of our religion, " but his that sent me. If any man will *do* his will, he shall *know* of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself." St. John, vii. 16, 17. —Ed.

name, with the highest honour and esteem, to latest posterity, is the ardent wish of

Your grace's most humble, &c[1].

Baretti's Dictionary of the English and Italian Languages. 2 vols. 4to. 1760.

To his excellency Don Felix, marquis of Abreu and Bertodano, ambassadour extraordinary and plenipotentiary from his Catholick Majesty to the king of Great Britain.

MY LORD,

THAT acuteness of penetration into characters and designs, and that nice discernment of human passions and practices, which have raised you to your present height of station and dignity of employment, have long shown you that dedicatory addresses are written for the sake of the author more frequently than of the patron; and, though they profess only reverence and zeal, are commonly dictated by interest or vanity.

I shall, therefore, not endeavour to conceal my motives, but confess, that the Italian Dictionary is dedicated to your excellency, that I might gratify my vanity, by making it known, that, in a country where I am a stranger, I have been able, without any external recommendation, to obtain the notice and countenance of a nobleman so eminent for knowledge and ability, that, in his twenty-third year, he was sent as plenipotentiary to superintend, at Aix la Chapelle, the interests of a nation remarkable, above all others, for gravity and prudence; and who, at an age when very few are admitted to publick trust, transacts the most important affairs between two of the greatest monarchs of the world.

If I could attribute to my own merits the favours which your excellency every day confers upon me, I know not

[1] This is the dedication mentioned by Dr. Johnson himself in Boswell's Life, vol. ii. 226. I should not else have suspected what has so little of his manner.

how much my pride might be inflamed; but, when I observe the extensive benevolence and boundless liberality, by which all who have the honour to approach you are dismissed more happy than they come, I am afraid of raising my own value, since I dare not ascribe it so much to my power of pleasing as your willingness to be pleased.

Yet, as every man is inclined to flatter himself, I am desirous to hope, that I am not admitted to greater intimacy than others, without some qualifications for so advantageous a distinction, and shall think it my duty to justify, by constant respect and sincerity, the favours which you have been pleased to show me.

I am, my lord,

Your excellency's most humble

and most obedient servant,

J. BARETTI.

London, Jan. 12, 1760.

A complete System of Astronomical Chronology, unfolding the Scriptures. By John Kennedy, rector of Bradley, in Derbyshire. 4to. 1762.

To the King.

SIR,

HAVING by long labour, and diligent inquiry, endeavoured to illustrate and establish the chronology of the bible, I hope to be pardoned the ambition of inscribing my work to your majesty.

An age of war is not often an age of learning; the tumult and anxiety of military preparations seldom leave attention vacant to the silent progress of study, and the placid conquests of investigation; yet, surely, a vindication of the inspired writers can never be unseasonably offered to the defender of the faith; nor can it ever be improper to promote that religion, without which all other blessings are snares of destruction; without which armies cannot make us safe, nor victories make us happy.

I am far from imagining that my testimony can add any thing to the honours of your majesty, to the splendour of a reign crowned with triumphs, to the beauty of a life dignified by virtue. I can only wish, that your reign may long continue such as it has begun, and that the effulgence of your example may spread its light through distant ages, till it shall be the highest praise of any future monarch, that he exhibits some resemblance of GEORGE THE THIRD.

I am, Sir,

Your majesty's, &c.

JOHN KENNEDY.

Hoole's translation of Tasso's Jerusalem Delivered. 1763.

To the Queen.

MADAM,

To approach the high and the illustrious has been, in all ages, the privilege of poets; and though translations cannot justly claim the same honour, yet they naturally follow their authors as attendants; and I hope that, in return for having enabled Tasso to diffuse his fame through the British dominions, I may be introduced by him to the presence of your majesty.

Tasso has a peculiar claim to your majesty's favour, as follower and panegyrist of the house of Este, which has one common ancestor with the house of Hanover; and, in reviewing his life, it is not easy to forbear a wish, that he had lived in a happier time, when he might, among the descendants of that illustrious family, have found a more liberal and potent patronage.

I cannot but observe, Madam, how unequally reward is proportioned to merit, when I reflect that the happiness which was withheld from Tasso, is reserved for me; and that the poem which once hardly procured to its author the countenance of the princes of Ferrara, has attracted to its translator the favourable notice of a British queen.

Had this been the fate of Tasso, he would have been able to have celebrated the condescension of your majesty in nobler language, but could not have felt it with more ardent gratitude, than,

Madam,

Your majesty's most faithful

and devoted servant.

London and Westminster Improved. Illustrated by Plans. 4to. 1766.

To the King.

SIR,

THE patronage of works which have a tendency towards advancing the happiness of mankind, naturally belongs to great princes; and publick good, in which publick elegance is comprised, has ever been the object of your majesty's regard.

In the following pages your majesty, I flatter myself, will find, that I have endeavoured at extensive and general usefulness. Knowing, therefore, your majesty's early attention to the polite arts, and more particular affection for the study of architecture, I was encouraged to hope, that the work which I now presume to lay before your majesty, might be thought not unworthy your royal favour; and that the protection which your majesty always affords to those who mean well, may be extended to,

Sir,

Your majesty's most dutiful subject,

and most obedient and most humble servant,

JOHN GWYNN.

The English Works of Roger Ascham, edited by James Bennet. 4to. 1767.

To the right hon. Anthony Ashley Cooper, earl of Shaftesbury, baron Ashley, lord lieutenant and custos rotulorum of Dorsetshire, F. R. S.

MY LORD,

HAVING endeavoured, by an elegant and useful edition, to recover the esteem of the publick to an author undeservedly neglected, the only care which I now owe to his memory, is that of inscribing his works to a patron, whose acknowledged eminence of character may awaken attention, and attract regard.

I have not suffered the zeal of an editor so far to take possession of my mind, as that I should obtrude upon your lordship any productions unsuitable to the dignity of your rank or of your sentiments. Ascham was not only the chief ornament of a celebrated college, but visited foreign countries, frequented courts, and lived in familiarity with statesmen and princes; not only instructed scholars in literature, but formed Elizabeth to empire.

To propagate the works of such a writer will not be unworthy of your lordship's patriotism; for I know not, what greater benefits you can confer on your country, than that of preserving worthy names from oblivion, by joining them with your own.

I am, my lord,

Your lordship's most obliged,

most obedient, and most humble servant,

JAMES BENNET.

Adams's Treatise on the Globes. 1767.

To the King.

SIR,

IT is the privilege of real greatness not to be afraid of diminution by condescending to the notice of little things; and I, therefore, can boldly solicit the patronage

of your majesty to the humble labours by which I have endeavoured to improve the instruments of science, and make the globes, on which the earth and sky are delineated, less defective in their construction, and less difficult in their use.

Geography is, in a peculiar manner, the science of princes. When a private student revolves the terraqueous globe, he beholds a succession of countries, in which he has no more interest, than in the imaginary regions of Jupiter and Saturn: but your majesty must contemplate the scientifick picture with other sentiments; and consider, as oceans and continents are rolling before you, how large a part of mankind is now waiting on your determinations, and may receive benefits, or suffer evils, as your influence is extended or withdrawn.

The provinces, which your majesty's arms have added to your dominions, make no inconsiderable part of the orb allotted to human beings. Your power is acknowledged by nations, whose names we know not yet how to write, and whose boundaries we cannot yet describe. But your majesty's lenity and beneficence give us reason to expect the time, when science shall be advanced by the diffusion of happiness; when the deserts of America shall become pervious and safe; when those who are now restrained by fear shall be attracted by reverence; and multitudes, who now range the woods for prey, and live at the mercy of winds and seasons, shall, by the paternal care of your majesty, enjoy the plenty of cultivated lands, the pleasures of society, the security of law, and the light of revelation.

I am, Sir,
Your majesty's most humble, most obedient,
and most dutiful subject and servant,
GEORGE ADAMS.

Bishop Zachary Pearce's Posthumous Works, 2 vols. 4to. Published by the Rev. Mr. Derby. 1777.

To the King.

SIR,

I PRESUME to lay before your majesty, the last labours of a learned bishop, who died in the toils and duties of his calling. He is now beyond the reach of all earthly honours and rewards; and only the hope of inciting others to imitate him, makes it now fit to be remembered, that he enjoyed in his life the favour of your majesty.

The tumultuary life of princes seldom permits them to survey the wide extent of national interest without losing sight of private merit; to exhibit qualities which may be imitated by the highest and the humblest of mankind; and to be at once amiable and great.

Such characters, if now and then they appear in history, are contemplated with admiration. May it be the ambition of all your subjects to make haste with their tribute of reverence: and, as posterity may learn from your majesty how kings should live, may they learn, likewise, from your people, how they should be honoured.

I am, may it please your majesty,
with the most profound respect,
Your majesty's most dutiful and devoted
subject and servant.

PREFACE

TO NEW TABLES OF INTEREST:

Designed to answer, in the most correct and expeditious manner, the common purposes of business, particularly the business of the publick funds.

BY JOHN PAYNE, OF THE BANK OF ENGLAND. 1758.

AMONG the writers of fiction, whose business is to furnish that entertainment which fancy perpetually demands, it is a standing plea, that the beauties of nature are now exhausted; that imitation has exerted all its power; and that nothing more can be done for the service of their mistress, than to exhibit a perpetual transposition of known objects, and draw new pictures, not by introducing new images, but by giving new lights and shades, a new arrangement and colouring to the old. This plea has been cheerfully admitted; and fancy, led by the hand of a skilful guide, treads over again the flowery path she has often trod before, as much enamoured with every new diversification of the same prospect, as with the first appearance of it.

In the regions of science, however, there is not the same indulgence: the understanding and the judgment travel there in the pursuit of Truth, whom they always expect to find in one simple form, free from the disguises of dress and ornament; and, as they travel with laborious step and a fixed eye, they are content to stop, when the shades of night darken the prospect, and patiently wait the radiance of a new morning, to lead them forward in the path they have chosen, which, however thorny, or however steep, is severely preferred to the most pleasing excursions that bring them no nearer to the object of their search. The plea, therefore, that nature is exhausted, and

that nothing is left to gratify the mind, but different combinations of the same ideas, when urged as a reason for multiplying unnecessary labours, among the sons of science, is not so readily admitted: the understanding, when in possession of truth, is satisfied with the simple acquisition; and not, like fancy, inclined to wander after new pleasures, in the diversification of objects already known, which, perhaps, may lead to errour.

But, notwithstanding this general disinclination to accumulate labours, for the sake of that pleasure which arises merely from different modes of investigating truth, yet, as the mines of science have been diligently opened, and their treasures widely diffused, there may be parts chosen, which, by a proper combination and arrangement, may contribute not only to entertainment but use; like the rays of the sun, collected in a concave mirror, to serve particular purposes of light and heat.

The power of arithmetical numbers has been tried to a vast extent, and variously applied to the improvement both of business and science. In particular, so many calculations have been made, with respect to the value and use of money, that some serve only for speculation and amusement; and there is great opportunity for selecting a few that are peculiarly adapted to common business, and the daily interchanges of property among men. Those which happen in the publick funds are, at this time, the most frequent and numerous; and to answer the purposes of that business, in some degree, more perfectly than has hitherto been done, the following tables are published. What that degree of perfection above other tables of the same kind may be, is a matter, not of opinion and taste, in which many might vary, but of accuracy and usefulness, with respect to which most will agree. The approbation they meet with will, therefore, depend upon the experience of those for whom they were principally designed, the proprietors of the publick funds, and the brokers who

transact the business of the funds, to whose patronage they are cheerfully committed.

Among the brokers of stocks are men of great honour and probity, who are candid and open in all their transactions, and incapable of mean and selfish purposes; and it is to be lamented, that a market of such importance, as the present state of this nation has made theirs, should be brought into any discredit by the intrusion of bad men, who, instead of serving their country, and procuring an honest subsistence in the army or the fleet, endeavour to maintain luxurious tables, and splendid equipages, by sporting with the publick credit.

It is not long, since the evil of stockjobbing was risen to such an enormous height, as to threaten great injury to every actual proprietor, particularly, to many widows and orphans, who, being bound to depend upon the funds for their whole subsistence, could not possibly retreat from the approaching danger. But this evil, after many unsuccessful attempts of the legislature to conquer it, was, like many others, at length subdued by its own violence; and the reputable stockbrokers seem now to have it in their power effectually to prevent its return, by not suffering the most distant approaches of it to take footing in their own practice, and by opposing every effort made for its recovery by the desperate sons of fortune, who, not having the courage of highwaymen take 'Change-alley rather than the road, because, though more injurious than highwaymen, they are less in danger of punishment by the loss either of liberty or life.

With respect to the other patrons, to whose encouragement these tables have been recommended, the proprietors of the publick funds, who are busy in the improvement of their fortunes, it is sufficient to say—that no motive can sanctify the accumulation of wealth, but an ardent desire to make the most honourable and virtuous use of it, by contributing to the support of good government, the in-

crease of arts and industry, the rewards of genius and virtue, and the relief of wretchedness and want.

What good, what true, what fit we justly call,
Let this be all our care—for this is all;
To lay this treasure up, and hoard with haste
What ev'ry day will want, and most the last.
This done, the poorest can no wants endure;
And this not done, the richest must be poor. POPE.

THOUGHTS ON THE CORONATION

OF HIS PRESENT MAJESTY,

KING GEORGE THE THIRD;

Or, reasons offered against confining the procession to the usual track, and pointing out others more commodious and proper. To which are prefixed, a plan of the different paths recommended, with the parts adjacent, and a sketch of the procession. Most humbly submitted to consideration [m].

ALL pomp is instituted for the sake of the publick. A show without spectators can no longer be a show. Magnificence in obscurity is equally vain with a sundial in the grave.

As the wisdom of our ancestors has appointed a very splendid and ceremonious inauguration of our kings, their intention was, that they should receive their crown with such awful rites, as might for ever impress upon them a due sense of the duties which they were to take, when the happiness of nations is put into their hands; and that the people, as many as can possibly be witnesses to any single act, should openly acknowledge their sovereign by universal homage.

By the late method of conducting the coronation, all these purposes have been defeated. Our kings, with their train, have crept to the temple through obscure passages; and the crown has been worn out of sight of the people.

m First printed in the year 1761.

Of the multitudes, whom loyalty or curiosity brought together, the greater part has returned without a single glimpse of their prince's grandeur, and the day that opened with festivity ended in discontent.

This evil has proceeded from the narrowness and shortness of the way, through which the procession has lately passed. As it is narrow, it admits of very few spectators; as it is short, it is soon passed. The first part of the train reaches the Abbey, before the whole has left the palace; and the nobility of England, in their robes of state, display their riches only to themselves.

All this inconvenience may be easily avoided by choosing a wider and longer course, which may be again enlarged and varied by going one way, and returning another. This is not without a precedent; for, not to inquire into the practice of remoter princes, the procession of Charles the second's coronation issued from the Tower, and passed through the whole length of the city to Whitehall[n].

[n] The king went early in the morning to the Tower of London in his coach, most of the lords being there before. And about ten of the clock they set forward towards Whitehall, ranged in that order as the heralds had appointed; those of the long robe, the king's council at law, the masters of the chancery and judges, going first, and so the lords in their order, very splendidly habited, on rich footcloths; the number of their footmen being limited, to the dukes ten, to the lords eight, and to the viscounts six, and to the barons four, all richly clad, as their other servants were. The whole show was the most glorious, in the order and expense, that had been ever seen in England: they who rode first being in Fleet street when the king issued out of the Tower, as was known by the discharge of the ordnance: and it was near three of the clock in the afternoon, when the king alighted at Whitehall. The next morning the king rode in the same state in his robes, and with his crown on his head, and all the lords in their robes to Westminster hall; where all the ensigns for the coronation were delivered to those who were appointed to carry them, the earl of Northumberland being made high constable, and the earl of Suffolk, earl marshal, for the day. And then all the lords in their order, and the king himself, walked on foot, upon blue cloth, from Westminster hall to the Abbey church, where, after a sermon preached by Dr. Morley, (then bishop of Worcester,) in Henry the seventh's chapel, the king was sworn, crowned, and anointed, by Dr. Juxon, archbishop of Canterbury, with all the solemnity that in those cases had been used. All which being done, the king returned in the same manner on foot to Westminster hall, which was adorned with rich hangings and statues; and there the king dined, and the lords on either side, at tables provided for them:

The path in the late coronations has been only from Westminster hall, along New Palace yard, into Union street, through the extreme end of King street, and to the Abbey door, by the way of St. Margaret's church yard.

The paths which I propose the procession to pass through, are,

1. From St. James's palace, along Pall Mall and Charing Cross, by Whitehall, through Parliament street, down Bridge street, into King street, round St. Margaret's church-yard, and from thence into the Abbey.

2. From St. James's palace across the canal, into the Birdcage walk, from thence into Great George street, then turning down Long ditch, (the Gate house previously to be taken down,) proceed to the Abbey. Or,

3. Continuing the course along George street, into King street, and by the way of St. Margaret's church yard, to pass into the west door of the Abbey.

4. From St. James's palace, the usual way his majesty passes to the House of Lords, as far as to the parade, when, leaving the horse guards on the left, proceed along the Park, up to Great George street, and pass to the Abbey in either of the tracks last mentioned.

5. From Westminster hall into Parliament street, down Bridge street, along Great George street, through Long ditch, (the Gate house, as before observed, to be taken down,) and so on to the west door of the Abbey.

6. From Whitehall up Parliament street, down Bridge street, into King street, round St. Margaret's church yard, proceed into the Abbey.

7. From the House of Lords along St. Margaret's street, across New Palace yard, into Parliament street, and from thence to the Abbey by the way last mentioned.

But if, on no account, the path must be extended to any of the lengths here recommended, I could wish, rather than see the procession confined to the old way, that it should pass,

and all other ceremonies were performed with great order and magnificence.—Life of lord Clarendon, p. 187.

8. From Westminster hall along Palace yard, into Parliament street, and continued in the last mentioned path, viz. through Bridge street, King street, and round the church yard, to the west door of the cathedral.

9. The return from the Abbey, in either case, to be as usual, viz. round St. Margaret's church yard, into King street, through Union street, along New Palace yard, and so into Westminster hall.

It is almost indifferent which of the six first ways, now proposed, be taken; but there is a stronger reason than mere convenience for changing the common course. Some of the streets in the old track are so ruinous, that there is danger lest the houses, loaded as they will be with people, all pressing forward in the same direction, should fall down upon the procession. The least evil that can be expected is, that in so close a crowd, some will be trampled upon, and others smothered; and, surely, a pomp that costs a single life is too dearly bought. The new streets, as they are more extensive, will afford place to greater numbers, with less danger.

In this proposal, I do not foresee any objection that can reasonably be made. That a longer march will require more time, is not to be mentioned, as implying any defect in a scheme, of which the whole purpose is to lengthen the march, and protract the time. The longest course, which I have proposed, is not equal to an hour's walk in the Park. The labour is not such, as that the king should refuse it to his people, or the nobility grudge it to the king. Queen Anne went from the palace through the Park to the Hall, on the day of her coronation; and, when old and infirm, used to pass, on solemn thanksgivings, from the palace to St. Paul's church[o].

[o] In order to convey to the reader some idea, how highly parade and magnificence were estimated by our ancestors, on these solemn occasions, I shall take notice of the manner of conducting lady Anne Boleyn from Greenwich, previous to her coronation, as it is recited by Stow.

King Henry the eighth (says that historian) having divorced queen Catherine, and married Anne Boleyn, or Boloine, who was descended from Godfrey Boloine, mayor of the city of London, and intending her coronation, sent to

Part of my scheme supposes the demolition of the Gate house, a building so offensive, that, without any occa-

order the lord mayor, not only to make all the preparations necessary for conducting his royal consort from Greenwich, by water, to the Tower of London, but to adorn the city after the most magnificent manner, for her passage through it to Westminster.

In obedience to the royal precept, the mayor and common council not only ordered the company of haberdashers, of which the lord mayor was a member, to prepare a magnificent state barge; but enjoined all the city corporations to provide themselves with barges, and to adorn them in the most superb manner, and especially to have them supplied with good bands of music.

On the 29th of May, the time prefixed for this pompous procession by water the mayor, aldermen, and commons, assembled at St. Mary hill; the mayor and aldermen in scarlet, with gold chains, and those who were knights, with the collars of SS. At one they went on board the city barge at Billingsgate, which was most magnificently decorated, and attended by fifty noble barges, belonging to the several companies of the city, with each its own corporation on board; and, for the better regulation of this procession, it was ordered, that each barge should keep twice their lengths asunder.

Thus regulated, the city barge was preceded by another mounted with ordnance, and the figures of dragons, and other monsters, incessantly emitting fire and smoke, with much noise. Then the city barge, attended on the right by the haberdashers' state barge, called the bachelors', which was covered with gold brocade, and adorned with sails of silk, with two rich standards of the king's and queen's arms at her head and stern, besides a variety of flags and streamers, containing the arms of that company, and those of the merchant adventurers; besides which, the shrouds and ratlines were hung with a number of small bells: on the left was a barge that contained a very beautiful mount, on which stood a white falcon crowned, perched upon a golden stump, enriched with roses, being the queen's emblem; and round the mount sat several beautiful virgins, singing, and playing upon instruments. The other barges followed, in regular order, till they came below Greenwich. On their return the procession began with that barge which was before the last, in which were the mayor's and sheriff's officers, and this was followed by those of the inferior companies, ascending to the lord mayor's, which immediately preceded that of the queen, who was attended by the bachelors' or state barge, with the magnificence of which her majesty was much delighted; and being arrived at the Tower, she returned the lord mayor and aldermen thanks, for the pomp with which she had been conducted thither.

Two days after, the lord mayor, in a gown of crimson velvet, and a rich collar of SS, attended by the sheriffs, and two domestics in red and white damask, went to receive the queen at the Tower of London, whence the sheriffs returned to see that every thing was in order. The streets were just before new gravelled, from the Tower to Temple-bar, and railed in on each side, to the intent that the horses should not slide on the pavement, nor the people be hurt by the horses; within the rails near Gracechurch, stood a body of Anseatic

sional reason, it ought to be pulled down, for it disgraces the present magnificence of the capital, and is a continual nuisance to neighbours and passengers.

merchants, and next to them the several corporations of the city, in their formalities, reaching to the alderman's station at the upper end of Cheapside. On the opposite side were placed the city constables, dressed in silk and velvet, with staffs in their hands, to prevent the breaking in of the mob, or any other disturbance. On this occasion, Gracechurch street and Corn hill were hung with crimson and scarlet cloth, and the sides of the houses of a place then called Goldsmiths' row, in Cheapside, were adorned with gold brocades, velvet, and rich tapestry.

The procession began from the Tower, with twelve of the French ambassador's domestics in blue velvet, the trappings of their horses being blue sarsnet, interspersed with white crosses; after whom marched those of the equestrian order, two and two, followed by judges in their robes, two and two; then came the knights of the bath in violet gowns, purfled with menever. Next came the abbots, barons, bishops, earls, and marquises, in their robes, two and two. Then the lord chancellor, followed by the Venetian ambassador and the archbishop of York; next the French ambassador and the archbishop of Canterbury, followed by two gentlemen representing the dukes of Normandy and Aquitain; after whom rode the lord mayor of London with his mace, and garter in his coat of arms; then the duke of Suffolk, lord high steward, followed by the deputy marshal of England, and all the other officers of state in their robes, carrying the symbols of their several offices: then others of the nobility in crimson velvet, and all the queen's officers in scarlet, followed by her chancellor uncovered, who immediately preceded his mistress.

The queen was dressed in silver brocade; with a mantle of the same furred with ermine; her hair was dishevelled, and she wore a chaplet upon her head set with jewels of inestimable value. She sat in a litter covered with silver tissue, and carried by two beautiful pads cloathed in white damask, and led by her footmen. Over the litter was carried a canopy of cloth of gold, with a silver bell at each corner, supported by sixteen knights alternately, by four at a time.

After her majesty came her chamberlain, followed by her master of horse, leading a beautiful pad, with a side-saddle, and trappings of silver tissue. Next came seven ladies in crimson velvet, faced with gold brocade, mounted on beautiful horses with gold trappings. Then followed two chariots covered with cloth of gold, in the first of which were the duchess of Norfolk and the marchioness of Dorset, and in the second four ladies in crimson velvet; then followed seven ladies dressed in the same manner, on horseback, with magnificent trappings, followed by another chariot all in white, with six ladies in crimson velvet; this was followed by another all in red, with eight ladies in the same dress with the former; next came thirty gentlewomen, attendants to the ladies of honour; they were on horseback, dressed in silks and velvet; and the cavalcade was closed by the horse guards.

This pompous procession being arrived in Fenchurch street, the queen stopped at a beautiful pageant, crowded with children in mercantile habits,

A longer course of scaffolding is, doubtless, more expensive than a shorter; but, it is hoped, that the time is now

who congratulated her majesty upon the joyful occasion of her happy arrival in the city.

Thence she proceeded to Gracechurch corner, where was erected a very magnificent pageant, at the expense of the company of Anseatic merchants, in which was represented mount Parnassus, with the fountain of Helicon, of white marble, out of which arose four springs, about four feet high, centering at the top in a small globe, from whence issued plenty of Rhenish wine till night. On the mount sat Apollo, at his feet was Calliope, and beneath were the rest of the Muses, surrounding the mount, and playing upon a variety of musical instruments, at whose feet were inscribed several epigrams suited to the occasion, in letters of gold.

Her majesty then proceeded to Leadenhall, where stood a pageant, representing a hill encompassed with red and white roses; and above it was a golden stump, upon which a white falcon, descending from above, perched, and was quickly followed by an angel, who put a crown of gold upon his head. A little lower on the hillock sat St. Anne, surrounded by her progeny, one of whom made an oration, in which was a wish that her majesty might prove extremely prolific.

The procession then advanced to the conduit in Corn hill, where the Graces sat enthroned, with a fountain before them, incessantly discharging wine; and underneath, a poet, who described the qualities peculiar to each of these amiable deities, and presented the queen with their several gifts.

The cavalcade thence proceeded to a great conduit that stood opposite to Mercers' hall in Cheapside, and, upon that occasion, was painted with a variety of emblems, and during the solemnity and remaining part of the day, ran with different sorts of wine, for the entertainment of the populace.

At the end of Wood street, the standard there was finely embellished with royal portraitures and a number of flags, on which were painted coats of arms and trophies, and above was a concert of vocal and instrumental music.

At the upper end of Cheapside was the aldermen's station, where the recorder addressed the queen in a very elegant oration, and, in the name of the citizens, presented her with a thousand marks, in a purse of gold tissue, which her majesty very gracefully received.

At a small distance, by Cheapside conduit, was a pageant, in which were seated Minerva, Juno, and Venus; before whom stood the god Mercury, who, in their names, presented the queen a golden apple.

At St. Paul's gate was a fine pageant, in which sat three ladies richly dressed, with each a chaplet on her head, and a tablet in her hand, containing Latin inscriptions.

At the east end of St. Paul's cathedral, the queen was entertained by some of the scholars belonging to St. Paul's school, with verses in praise of the king and her majesty, with which she seemed highly delighted.

Thence proceeding to Ludgate, which was finely decorated, her majesty was entertained with several songs adapted to the occasion, sung in concert by men and boys upon the leads over the gate.

passed, when any design was received or rejected, according to the money that it would cost. Magnificence cannot be cheap, for what is cheap cannot be magnificent. The money that is so spent, is spent at home, and the king will receive again what he lays out on the pleasure of his people. Nor is it to be omitted, that, if the cost be considered as expended by the publick, much more will be saved than lost; for the excessive prices, at which windows and tops of houses are now let, will be abated; not only greater numbers will be admitted to the show, but each will come at a cheaper rate.

Some regulations are necessary, whatever track be chosen. The scaffold ought to be raised at least four feet, with rails high enough to support the standers, and yet so low as not to hinder the view.

It would add much to the gratification of the people, if the horse guards, by which all our processions have been of late encumbered, and rendered dangerous to the multitude, were to be left behind at the coronation; and if, contrary to the desires of the people, the procession must pass in the old track, that the number of foot soldiers be diminished; since it cannot but offend every Englishman to see troops of soldiers placed between him and his sovereign, as if they were the most honourable of the people, or the king

At the end of Shoe lane, in Fleet street, a handsome tower with four turrets, was erected upon the conduit, in each of which stood one of the cardinal virtues, with their several symbols; who, addressing themselves to the queen, promised they would never leave her, but be always her constant attendants. Within the tower was an excellent concert of music, and the conduit all the while ran with various sorts of wine.

At Temple-bar she was again entertained with songs, sung in concert by a choir of men and boys; and having from thence proceeded to Westminster, she returned the lord mayor thanks for his good offices, and those of the citizens, that day. The day after, the lord mayor, aldermen, and sheriffs, assisted at the coronation, which was performed with great splendour.—Stow's Annals.

Note. The same historian informs us, that queen Elizabeth passed in the like manner, through the city, to her coronation.

The admirers of the descriptions of pageants may be amply gratified in Henry's History of England. The field of the cloth of gold shines "luna inter minora sidera."—Ed.

required guards to secure his person from his subjects. As their station makes them think themselves important, their insolence is always such as may be expected from servile authority; and the impatience of the people, under such immediate oppression, always produces quarrels, tumults, and mischief.

PREFACE TO THE ARTISTS' CATALOGUE, FOR 1762.

THE publick may justly require to be informed of the nature and extent of every design, for which the favour of the publick is openly solicited. The artists, who were themselves the first projectors of an exhibition in this nation, and who have now contributed to the following catalogue, think it, therefore, necessary to explain their purpose, and justify their conduct. An exhibition of the works of art, being a spectacle new in this kingdom, has raised various opinions and conjectures, among those who are unacquainted with the practice in foreign nations. Those who set out their performances to general view, have been too often considered as the rivals of each other, as men actuated, if not by avarice, at least by vanity, and contending for superiority of fame, though not for a pecuniary prize: it cannot be denied or doubted, that all who offer themselves to criticism are desirous of praise; this desire is not only innocent, but virtuous, while it is undebased by artifice, and unpolluted by envy, and of envy or artifice these men can never be accused, who, already enjoying all the honours and profits of their profession, are content to stand candidates for publick notice, with genius yet unexperienced, and diligence yet unrewarded; who, without any hope of increasing their own reputation or interest, expose their names and their works, only that they may furnish an opportunity of appearance

to the young, the diffident, and the neglected. The purpose of this exhibition is not to enrich the artists, but to advance the art; the eminent are not flattered with preference, nor the obscure insulted with contempt; whoever hopes to deserve publick favour, is here invited to display his merit.

Of the price put upon this exhibition, some account may be demanded. Whoever sets his work to be shown, naturally desires a multitude of spectators; but his desire defeats its own end, when spectators assemble in such numbers as to obstruct one another. Though we are far from wishing to diminish the pleasures, or depreciate the sentiments of any class of the community, we know, however, what every one knows, that all cannot be judges or purchasers of works of art; yet we have already found, by experience, that all are desirous to see an exhibition. When the terms of admission were low, our room was thronged with such multitudes as made access dangerous, and frightened away those whose approbation was most desired.

Yet, because it is seldom believed that money is got but for the love of money, we shall tell the use which we intend to make of our expected profits.

Many artists of great abilities are unable to sell their works for their due price; to remove this inconvenience, an annual sale will be appointed, to which every man may send his works, and send them, if he will, without his name. These works will be reviewed by the committee that conduct the exhibition. A price will be secretly set on every piece, and registered by the secretary. If the piece exposed is sold for more, the whole price shall be the artist's; but if the purchaser's value is at less than the committee, the artist shall be paid the deficiency from the profits of the exhibition.

OPINIONS

ON QUESTIONS OF LAW.

THE following opinions on cases of law may be regarded as among the strongest proofs of Johnson's enlarged powers of mind, and of his ability to grapple with subjects, on general principles, with whose technicalities he could not be familiar. Of law, as a science, he ever expressed the deepest admiration, and an author who combines an accurate knowledge of the practical details of jurisprudence with the most philosophical views of legal principles, has quoted Dr. Johnson, as pronouncing the study of law "the last effort of human intelligence acting upon human experience." We allude to the eloquent and excellent Sir James Mackintosh's Discourse on the Study of the Law of Nature and Nations, p. 58. Lord Bacon, in his two books on the Advancement of Learning, has affirmed, that professed lawyers are not the best law authors; and the comprehensive and lucid opinions which Dr. Johnson has here given, and which, in many instances, have been subsequently sanctioned by legislative authority, seem to establish the remark.

The first Case in the present edition, involves an ingenious defence of the right of abridgment, founded on considerations on Dr. Trapp's celebrated sermons "on the nature, folly, sin, and danger of being righteous over-much." These discourses, about the year 1739, when methodism was a novelty, attracted much attention. Mr. Cave, always anxious to gratify his readers, abridged and extracted parts from them, and promised a continuation. This never appeared; stopped, perhaps, by threats of prosecution on the part of the original publishers of the sermons. It was, in all probability, on this occasion, that Dr. Johnson wrote the following paper.—Gent. Mag. July, 1787. It is a subject with whose bearings he might be presumed to be practically conversant; and, accordingly, we find, in his memoirs, many recorded arguments of his, on literary property. They uniformly exhibit the most enlarged and liberal views—a readiness to sacrifice private considerations to publick and general good. He wished the author to be adequately remunerated for his labour, and tenderly protected from spoliation, but, by no means, encouraged in monopoly. See Boswell's Life, i. ii. iv.

CONSIDERATIONS

ON THE

CASE OF DR. T [RAPP]'s SERMONS.

ABRIDGED BY MR. CAVE, 1739.

1. THAT the copy of a book is the property of the author, and that he may, by sale, or otherwise, transfer that property to another, who has a right to be protected in the possession of that property, so transferred, is not to be denied.

2. That the complainants may be lawfully invested with the property of this copy, is likewise granted.

3. But the complainants have mistaken the nature of this property; and, in consequence of their mistake, have supposed it to be invaded by an act, in itself legal, and justifiable by an uninterrupted series of precedents, from the first establishment of printing among us, down to the present time.

4. He that purchases the copy of a book, purchases the sole right of printing it, and of vending the books printed according to it; but has no right to add to it, or take from it, without the author's consent, who still preserves such a right in it, as follows from the right every man has to preserve his own reputation.

5. Every single book, so sold by the proprietor, becomes the property of the buyer, who purchases, with the book, the right of making such use of it as he shall think most convenient, either for his own improvement or amusement, or the benefit or entertainment of mankind.

6. This right the reader of a book may use, many ways, to the disadvantage both of the author and the proprietor, which yet they have not any right to complain of, because the author when he wrote, and the proprietor when he purchased the copy, knew, or ought to have known, that

the one wrote, and the other purchased, under the hazard of such treatment from the buyer and reader, and without any security from the bad consequences of that treatment, except the excellence of the book.

7. Reputation and property are of different kinds; one kind of each is more necessary to be secured by the law than another, and the law has provided more effectually for its defence. My character as a man, a subject, or a trader, is under the protection of the law; but my reputation, as an author, is at the mercy of the reader, who lies under no other obligations to do me justice than those of religion and morality. If a man calls me rebel or bankrupt, I may prosecute and punish him; but, if a man calls me ideot or plagiary, I have no remedy; since, by selling him the book, I admit his privilege of judging, and declaring his judgment, and can appeal only to other readers, if I think myself injured.

8. In different characters we are more or less protected; to hiss a pleader at the bar would, perhaps, be deemed illegal and punishable, but to hiss a dramatick writer is justifiable by custom.

9. What is here said of the writer, extends itself naturally to the purchaser of a copy, since the one seldom suffers without the other.

10. By these liberties it is obvious, that authors and proprietors may often suffer, and sometimes unjustly: but as these liberties are encouraged and allowed for the same reason with writing itself, for the discovery and propagation of truth, though, like other human goods, they have their alloys and ill consequences; yet, as their advantages abundantly preponderate, they have never yet been abolished or restrained.

11. Thus every book, when it falls into the hands of the reader, is liable to be examined, confuted, censured, translated, and abridged; any of which may destroy the credit of the author, or hinder the sale of the book.

12. That all these liberties are allowed, and cannot be prohibited without manifest disadvantage to the publick,

may be easily proved; but we shall confine ourselves to the liberty of making epitomes, which gives occasion to our present inquiry.

13. That an uninterrupted prescription confers a right, will be easily granted, especially if it appears that the prescription, pleaded in defence of that right, might at any time have been interrupted, had it not been always thought agreeable to reason and to justice.

14. The numberless abridgments that are to be found of all kinds of writings, afford sufficient evidence that they were always thought legal, for they are printed with the names of the abbreviators and publishers, and without the least appearance of a clandestine transaction. Many of the books, so abridged, were the properties of men who wanted neither wealth, nor interest, nor spirit, to sue for justice, if they had thought themselves injured. Many of these abridgments must have been made by men whom we can least suspect of illegal practices, for there are few books of late that are not abridged.

15. When bishop Burnet heard that his History of the Reformation was about to be abridged, he did not think of appealing to the court of chancery; but, to avoid any misrepresentation of his history, epitomised it himself, as he tells us in his preface.

16. But, lest it should be imagined that an author might do this rather by choice than necessity, we shall produce two more instances of the like practice, where it would certainly not have been borne, if it had been suspected of illegality. The one, in Clarendon's History, which was abridged, in 2 vols. 8vo.; and the other in bishop Burnet's History of his Own Time, abridged in the same manner. The first of these books was the property of the university of Oxford, a body tenacious enough of their rights; the other, of bishop Burnet's heirs, whose circumstances were such as made them very sensible of any diminution of their inheritance.

17. It is observable, that both these abridgments last mentioned, with many others that might be produced, were

made when the act of parliament for securing the property of copies was in force, and which, if that property was injured, afforded an easy redress: what then can be inferred from the silence and forbearance of the proprietors, but that they thought an epitome of a book no violation of the right of the proprietor?

18. That their opinion, so contrary to their own interest, was founded in reason, will appear from the nature and end of an abridgment.

19. The design of an abridgment is, to benefit mankind by facilitating the attainment of knowledge; and by contracting arguments, relations, or descriptions, into a narrow compass, to convey instruction in the easiest method, without fatiguing the attention, burdening the memory, or impairing the health of the student.

20. By this method the original author becomes, perhaps, of less value, and the proprietor's profits are diminished; but these inconveniencies give way to the advantage received by mankind, from the easier propagation of knowledge; for as an incorrect book is lawfully criticised, and false assertions justly confuted, because it is more the interest of mankind, that errour should be detected, and truth discovered, than that the proprietors of a particular book should enjoy their profits undiminished; so a tedious volume may, no less lawfully, be abridged, because it is better that the proprietors should suffer some damage, than that the acquisition of knowledge should be obstructed with unnecessary difficulties, and the valuable hours of thousands thrown away.

21. Therefore, as he that buys the copy of a book, buys it under this condition, that it is liable to be confuted, if it is false, however his property may be affected by such a confutation; so he buys it, likewise, liable to be abridged, if it be tedious, however his property may suffer by the abridgment.

22. To abridge a book, therefore, is no violation of the right of the proprietor, because to be subject to the hazard of an abridgment was an original condition of the property.

23. Thus we see the right of abridging authors established both by reason and the customs of trade. But, perhaps, the necessity of this practice may appear more evident, from a consideration of the consequences that must probably follow from the prohibition of it.

24. If abridgments be condemned, as injurious to the proprietor of the copy, where will this argument end? Must not confutations be, likewise, prohibited for the same reason? Or, in writings of entertainment, will not criticisms, at least, be entirely suppressed, as equally hurtful to the proprietor, and certainly not more necessary to the publick?

25. Will not authors, who write for pay, and who are rewarded, commonly, according to the bulk of their work, be tempted to fill their works with superfluities and digressions, when the dread of an abridgment is taken away, as doubtless more negligences would be committed, and more falsehoods published, if men were not restrained by the fear of censure and confutation?

26. How many useful works will the busy, the indolent, and the less wealthy part of mankind be deprived of! How few will read or purchase forty-four large volumes of the transactions of the royal society, which, in abridgment, are generally read, to the great improvement of philosophy!

27. How must general systems of sciences be written, which are nothing more than epitomes of those authors who have written on particular branches, and those works are made less necessary by such collections! Can he that destroys the profit of many copies be less criminal than he that lessens the sale of one?

28. Even to confute an erroneous book will become more difficult, since it has always been a custom to abridge the author whose assertions are examined, and, sometimes, to transcribe all the essential parts of his book. Must an inquirer after truth be debarred from the benefit of such confutations, unless he purchases the book, however useless, that gave occasion to the answer?

29. Having thus endeavoured to prove the legality of abridgments from custom, and the necessity of continuing

that custom from reason, it remains only that we show, that we have not printed the complainant's copy, but abridged it[p].

30. This will need no proof, since it will appear, upon comparing the two books, that we have reduced thirty-seven pages to thirteen of the same print.

31. Our design is, to give our readers a short view of the present controversy; and we require, that one of these two positions be proved, either that we have no right to exhibit such a view, or that we can exhibit it, without epitomising the writers of each party.

ON SCHOOL CHASTISEMENT.

[The following argument, on school chastisement, was dictated to Mr. Boswell, who was counsel in the case. It originated in 1772, when a schoolmaster at Campbelltown was deprived, by a court of inferior jurisdiction, of his office, for alleged cruelty to his scholars. The court of session restored him. The parents or friends, whose weak indulgence had listened to their children's complaints in the first stage, now appealed to the house of lords, who reversed the decree of the court of session, and the schoolmaster was, accordingly, deprived of his situation, April 14, 1772.—Boswell, ii.]

THE charge is, that this schoolmaster has used immoderate and cruel correction. Correction, in itself, is not cruel; children, being not reasonable, can be governed only by fear. To impress this fear is, therefore, one of the first duties of those who have the care of children. It is the duty of a parent; and has never been thought inconsistent with parental tenderness. It is the duty of a master, who is in his highest exaltation, when he is "loco parentis[q]." Yet, as good things become evil by excess, correction, by being immoderate, may become cruel. But, when is correction immoderate? When it is more frequent

[p] A fair and bona fide abridgment of any book is considered a new work; and however it may injure the sale of the original, yet it is not deemed, in law, to be a piracy, or violation of the author's copyright. 1 Bro. 451. 2. Atk. 141. and Mr. Christian's note on the Commentaries, ii. 407.—ED.

[q] See Blackstone's Comment. i. 453.

or more severe than is required, "ad monendum et docendum," for reformation and instruction. No severity is cruel which obstinacy makes necessary; for the greatest cruelty would be to desist, and leave the scholar too careless for instruction, and too much hardened for reproof. Locke, in his Treatise of Education, mentions a mother, with applause, who whipped an infant eight times before she had subdued it; for, had she stopped at the seventh act of correction, her daughter, says he, would have been ruined. The degrees of obstinacy in young minds are very different; as different must be the degrees of persevering severity. A stubborn scholar must be corrected, till he is subdued. The discipline of a school is military. There must be either unbounded license, or absolute authority. The master, who punishes, not only consults the future happiness of him who is the immediate subject of correction, but he propagates obedience through the whole school; and establishes regularity by exemplary justice. The victorious obstinacy of a single boy, would make his future endeavours of reformation or instruction totally ineffectual. Obstinacy, therefore, must never be victorious. Yet, it is well known that there, sometimes, occurs a sullen and hardy resolution, that laughs at all common punishment, and bids defiance to all common degrees of pain. Correction must be proportionate to occasions. The flexible will be reformed by gentle discipline, and the refractory must be subdued by harsher methods. The degrees of scholastick, as of military punishment, no stated rules can ascertain. It must be enforced till it overpowers temptation; till stubbornness become flexible, and perverseness regular. Custom and reason have, indeed, set some bounds to scholastick penalties. The schoolmaster inflicts no capital punishments; nor enforces his edicts by either death or mutilation. The civil law has wisely determined, that a master who strikes at a scholar's eye shall be considered as criminal. But punishments, however severe, that produce no lasting evil, may be just and reasonable, because they may be necessary. Such have

been the punishments used by the respondent. No scholar has gone from him either blind or lame, or with any of his limbs or powers injured or impaired. They were irregular, and he punished them; they were obstinate, and he enforced his punishment. But, however provoked, he never exceeded the limits of moderation, for he inflicted nothing beyond present pain; and how much of that was required, no man is so little able to determine as those who have determined against him—the parents of the offenders. It has been said, that he used unprecedented and improper instruments of correction. Of this accusation the meaning is not very easy to be found. No instrument of correction is more proper than another, but as it is better adapted to produce present pain, without lasting mischief. Whatever were his instruments, no lasting mischief has ensued; and, therefore, however unusual, in hands so cautious, they were proper. It has been objected, that the respondent admits the charge of cruelty, by producing no evidence to confute it. Let it be considered, that his scholars are either dispersed at large in the world, or continue to inhabit the place in which they were bred. Those who are dispersed cannot be found; those who remain are the sons of his prosecutors, and are not likely to support a man to whom their fathers are enemies. If it be supposed that the enmity of their fathers proves the justness of the charge, it must be considered how often experience shows us, that men who are angry on one ground will accuse on another; with how little kindness, in a town of low trade, a man who lives by learning is regarded; and how implicitly, where the inhabitants are not very rich, a rich man is hearkened to and followed. In a place like Campbelltown, it is easy for one of the principal inhabitants to make a party. It is easy for that party to heat themselves with imaginary grievances. It is easy for them to oppress a man poorer than themselves; and natural to assert the dignity of riches, by persisting in oppression. The argument which attempts to prove the impropriety of restoring him to the school, by alleging that he has lost the confi-

dence of the people, is not the subject of juridical consideration; for he is to suffer, if he must suffer, not for their judgment, but for his own actions. It may be convenient for them to have another master; but it is a convenience of their own making. It would be, likewise, convenient for him to find another school; but this convenience he cannot obtain. The question is not, what is now convenient, but what is generally right. If the people of Campbelltown be distressed by the restoration of the respondent, they are distressed only by their own fault; by turbulent passions and unreasonable desires; by tyranny, which law has defeated, and by malice, which virtue has surmounted.

VITIOUS INTROMISSION.

[This argument cannot be better prefaced than by Mr. Boswell's own exposition of the law of vitious intromission. He was himself an advocate at the Scotch bar, and of counsel in this case. "It was held of old, and continued for a long period, to be an established principle in Scotch law, that whoever intermeddled with the effects of a person deceased, without the interposition of legal authority to guard against embezzlement, should be subjected to pay all the debts of the deceased, as having been guilty of what was technically called *vitious intromission*. The court of session had, gradually, relaxed the strictness of this principle, where an interference proved had been inconsiderable. In the case of Wilson against Smith and Armour, in the year 1772, I had laboured to persuade the judge to return to the ancient law. It was my own sincere opinion, that they ought to adhere to it; but I had exhausted all my powers of reasoning in vain. Johnson thought as I did; and in order to assist me in my application to the court, for a revision and alteration of the judgment, he dictated to me the following argument."—Boswell, ii. 200.]

THIS, we are told, is a law which has its force only from the long practice of the court; and may, therefore, be suspended or modified as the court shall think proper.

Concerning the power of the court, to make or to suspend a law, we have no intention to inquire. It is sufficient, for our purpose, that every just law is dictated by reason, and that the practice of every legal court is regulated by equity. It is the quality of reason, to be invariable and constant; and of equity, to give to one man what,

in the same case, is given to another. The advantage which humanity derives from law is this: that the law gives every man a rule of action, and prescribes a mode of conduct which shall entitle him to the support and protection of society. That the law may be a rule of action, it is necessary that it be known; it is necessary that it be permanent and stable. The law is the measure of civil right; but, if the measure be changeable, the extent of the thing measured never can be settled.

To permit a law to be modified at discretion, is to leave the community without law. It is to withdraw the direction of that publick wisdom, by which the deficiencies of private understanding are to be supplied. It is to suffer the rash and ignorant to act at discretion, and then to depend for the legality of that action on the sentence of the judge. He that is thus governed lives not by law, but by opinion; not by a certain rule, to which he can apply his intention before he acts, but by an uncertain and variable opinion, which he can never know but after he has committed the act, on which that opinion shall be passed. He lives by a law, if a law it be, which he can never know before he has offended it. To this case may be justly applied that important principle, "misera est servitus ubi jus est aut incognitum aut vagum." If intromission be not criminal, till it exceeds a certain point, and that point be unsettled, and, consequently, different in different minds, the right of intromission, and the right of the creditor arising from it, are all *jura vaga*, and, by consequence, are *jura incognita*; and the result can be no other than a *misera servitus*, an uncertainty concerning the event of action, a servile dependance on private opinion.

It may be urged, and with great plausibility, that there may be intromission without fraud; which, however true, will by no means justify an occasional and arbitrary relaxation of the law. The end of law is protection, as well as vengeance. Indeed, vengeance is never used but to strengthen protection. That society only is well governed, where life is freed from danger and from suspi-

cion; where possession is so sheltered by salutary prohibitions, that violation is prevented more frequently than punished. Such a prohibition was this, while it operated with its original force. The creditor of the deceased was not only without loss, but without fear. He was not to seek a remedy for an injury suffered; for injury was warded off.

As the law has been sometimes administered, it lays us open to wounds, because it is imagined to have the power of healing. To punish fraud, when it is detected, is the proper art of vindictive justice; but to prevent frauds, and make punishment unnecessary, is the great employment of legislative wisdom. To permit intromission, and to punish fraud, is to make law no better than a pitfall. To tread upon the brink is safe; but to come a step further is destruction. But, surely, it is better to enclose the gulf, and hinder all access, than by encouraging us to advance a little, to entice us afterwards a little further, and let us perceive our folly only by our destruction.

As law supplies the weak with adventitious strength, it likewise enlightens the ignorant with extrinsick understanding. Law teaches us to know when we commit injury and when we suffer it. It fixes certain marks upon actions, by which we are admonished to do or to forbear them. "Qui sibi bene temperat in licitis," says one of the fathers, "nunquam cadet in illicita:" he who never intromits at all, will never intromit with fraudulent intentions.

The relaxation of the law against vitious intromission has been very favourably represented by a great master of jurisprudence[r], whose words have been exhibited with unnecessary pomp, and seem to be considered as irresistibly decisive. The great moment of his authority makes it necessary to examine his position: 'Some ages ago,' says he, 'before the ferocity of the inhabitants of this part of the island was subdued, the utmost severity of the civil law was necessary, to restrain individuals from plundering each other. Thus, the man who intermeddled

[r] Lord Kames, in his Historical Law Tracts.

irregularly with the moveables of a person deceased, was subjected to all the debts of the deceased, without limitation. This makes a branch of the law of Scotland, known by the name of vitious intromission: and so rigidly was this regulation applied in our courts of law, that the most trifling moveable abstracted mala fide, subjected the intermeddler to the foregoing consequences, which proved, in many instances, a most rigorous punishment. But this severity was necessary, in order to subdue the undisciplined nature of our people. It is extremely remarkable, that, in proportion to our improvement in manners, this regulation has been gradually softened, and applied by our sovereign court with a sparing hand.'

I find myself under the necessity of observing, that this learned and judicious writer has not accurately distinguished the deficiencies and demands of the different conditions of human life, which, from a degree of savageness and independence, in which all laws are vain, passes, or may pass, by innumerable gradations, to a state of reciprocal benignity, in which laws shall be no longer necessary. Men are first wild and unsocial, living each man to himself, taking from the weak, and losing to the strong. In their first coalitions of society, much of this original savageness is retained. Of general happiness, the product of general confidence, there is yet no thought. Men continue to prosecute their own advantages by the nearest way; and the utmost severity of the civil law is necessary to restrain individuals from plundering each other. The restraints then necessary, are restraints from plunder, from acts of publick violence, and undisguised oppression. The ferocity of our ancestors, as of all other nations, produced not fraud, but rapine. They had not yet learned to cheat, and attempted only to rob. As manners grow more polished, with the knowledge of good, men attain, likewise, dexterity in evil. Open rapine becomes less frequent, and violence gives way to cunning. Those who before invaded pastures and stormed houses, now begin to enrich themselves by unequal contracts and fraudulent intromissions.

It is not against the violence of ferocity, but the circumventions of deceit, that this law was framed; and, I am afraid, the increase of commerce, and the incessant struggle for riches, which commerce excites, give us no prospect of an end speedily to be expected of artifice and fraud. It, therefore, seems to be no very conclusive reasoning, which connects those two propositions:—'the nation is become less ferocious, and, therefore, the laws against fraud and covin shall be relaxed.'

Whatever reason may have influenced the judges to a relaxation of the law, it was not that the nation was grown less fierce; and, I am afraid, it cannot be affirmed, that it is grown less fraudulent.

Since this law has been represented as rigorously and unreasonably penal, it seems not improper to consider, what are the conditions and qualities that make the justice or propriety of a penal law.

To make a penal law reasonable and just, two conditions are necessary, and two proper. It is necessary that the law should be adequate to its end; that, if it be observed, it shall prevent the evil against which it is directed. It is, secondly, necessary that the end of the law be of such importance as to deserve the security of a penal sanction. The other conditions of a penal law, which, though not absolutely necessary, are, to a very high degree, fit, are, that to the moral violation of the law there are many temptations, and, that of the physical observance there is great facility.

All these conditions apparently concur to justify the law which we are now considering. Its end is the security of property, and property very often of great value. The method by which it effects the security is efficacious, because it admits, in its original rigour, no gradations of injury; but keeps guilt and innocence apart, by a distinct and definite limitation. He that intromits, is criminal; he that intromits not, is innocent. Of the two secondary considerations it cannot be denied that both are in our favour. The temptation to intromit is frequent and strong; so

strong, and so frequent, as to require the utmost activity of justice, and vigilance of caution, to withstand its prevalence: and the method by which a man may entitle himself to legal intromission, is so open and so facile, that to neglect it is a proof of fraudulent intention; for why should a man omit to do (but for reasons which he will not confess) that which he can do so easily, and that which he knows to be required by the law? If temptation were rare, a penal law might be deemed unnecessary. If the duty, enjoined by the law, were of difficult performance, omission, though it could not be justified, might be pitied. But in the present case, neither equity nor compassion operate against it. An useful, a necessary law is broken, not only without a reasonable motive, but with all the inducements to obedience that can be derived from safety and facility.

I, therefore, return to my original position, that a law, to have its effects, must be permanent and stable. It may be said, in the language of the schools, "lex non recipit majus et minus;" we may have a law, or we may have no law, but we cannot have half a law. We must either have a rule of action, or be permitted to act by discretion and by chance. Deviations from the law must be uniformly punished, or no man can be certain when he shall be safe.

That from the rigour of the original institution this court has sometimes departed, cannot be denied. But as it is evident that such deviations as they, make law uncertain, make life unsafe, I hope, that of departing from it there will now be an end; that the wisdom of our ancestors will be treated with due reverence; and that consistent and steady decisions will furnish the people with a rule of action, and leave fraud and fraudulent intromissions no future hope of impunity or escape[s].

[s] "This masterly argument on vitious intromission, after being prefaced and concluded with some sentences of my own," says Mr. Boswell, "and garnished with the usual formularies, was actually printed, and laid before the lords of session, but without success."—Boswell, ii. 207.

ON LAY PATRONAGE

IN THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND.

[Dr. Johnson has treated this delicate and difficult subject with unusual acuteness. As Mr. Boswell has recorded the argument, we will make use, once more, of his words to introduce it; observing, by the way, that it did not convince Mr. Boswell's own mind, who was himself a lay patron. "I introduced a question which has been much agitated in the church of Scotland, whether the claim of lay patrons to present ministers to parishes be well founded; and, supposing it to be well founded, whether it ought to be exercised without the concurrence of the people? That church is composed of a series of judicatures; a presbytery, a synod, and, finally, a general assembly; before all of which this matter may be contended; and, in some cases, the presbytery having refused to induct or *settle*, as they call it, the person presented by the patron, it has been found necessary to appeal to the general assembly. Johnson said, I might see the subject well treated in the Defence of Pluralities; and although he thought that a patron should exercise his right with tenderness to the inclinations of the people of a parish, he was very clear as to his right. Then supposing the question to be pleaded before the general assembly, he dictated to me what follows."—Boswell, ii. 248.]

AGAINST the right of patrons is commonly opposed, by the inferiour judicatures, the plea of conscience. Their conscience tells them, that the people ought to choose their pastor; their conscience tells them, that they ought not to impose upon a congregation a minister ungrateful and unacceptable to his auditors. Conscience is nothing more than a conviction, felt by ourselves, of something to be done, or something to be avoided; and in questions of simple unperplexed morality, conscience is very often a guide that may be trusted. But before conscience can determine, the state of the question is supposed to be completely known. In questions of law, or of fact, conscience is very often confounded with opinion. No man's conscience can tell him the rights of another man; they must be known by rational investigation, or historical inquiry. Opinion, which he that holds it may call his conscience, may teach some men that religion would be promoted, and quiet preserved, by granting to the people universally the choice of their ministers. But it is a conscience very ill informed that violates the rights of one

man, for the convenience of another. Religion cannot be promoted by injustice: and it was never yet found that a popular election was very quietly transacted.

That justice would be violated by transferring to the people the right of patronage, is apparent to all who know whence that right had its original. The right of patronage was not at first a privilege torn by power from unresisting poverty. It is not an authority, at first usurped in times of ignorance, and established only by succession and by precedents. It is not a grant capriciously made from a higher tyrant to a lower. It is a right dearly purchased by the first possessours, and justly inherited by those that succeed them. When christianity was established in this island, a regular mode of worship was prescribed. Publick worship requires a publick place; and the proprietors of lands, as they were converted, built churches for their families and their vassals. For the maintenance of ministers they settled a certain portion of their lands; and a district, through which each minister was required to extend his care, was, by that circumscription, constituted a parish. This is a position so generally received in England, that the extent of a manor and of a parish are regularly received for each other. The churches which the proprietors of lands had thus built and thus endowed, they justly thought themselves entitled to provide with ministers; and, where the episcopal government prevails, the bishop has no power to reject a man nominated by the patron, but for some crime that might exclude him from the priesthood. For, the endowment of the church being the gift of the landlord, he was, consequently, at liberty to give it, according to his choice, to any man capable of performing the holy offices. The people did not choose him, because the people did not pay him.

We hear it sometimes urged, that this original right is passed out of memory, and is obliterated and obscured by many translations of property and changes of government; that scarce any church is now in the hands of the heirs of the builders; and that the present persons have

entered subsequently upon the pretended rights by a thousand accidental and unknown causes. Much of this, perhaps, is true. But how is the right of patronage extinguished? If the right followed the lands, it is possessed, by the same equity by which the lands are possessed. It is, in effect, part of the manor, and protected by the same laws with every other privilege. Let us suppose an estate forfeited by treason, and granted by the crown to a new family. With the lands were forfeited all the rights appendant to those lands; by the same power that grants the lands, the rights also are granted. The right, lost to the patron, falls not to the people, but is either retained by the crown, or, what to the people is the same thing, is by the crown given away. Let it change hands ever so often, it is possessed by him that receives it, with the same right as it was conveyed. It may, indeed, like all our possessions, be forcibly seized or fraudulently obtained. But no injury is still done to the people; for what they never had, they have never lost. Caius may usurp the right of Titius, but neither Caius nor Titius injure the people; and no man's conscience, however tender or however active, can prompt him to restore what may be proved to have been never taken away. Supposing, what I think cannot be proved, that a popular election of ministers were to be desired, our desires are not the measure of equity. It were to be desired, that power should be only in the hands of the merciful, and riches in the possession of the generous; but the law must leave both riches and power where it finds them; and must often leave riches with the covetous, and power with the cruel. Convenience may be a rule in little things, where no other rule has been established. But, as the great end of government is to give every man his own, no inconvenience is greater than that of making right uncertain. Nor is any man more an enemy to publick peace, than he who fills weak heads with imaginary claims, and breaks the series of civil subordination, by inciting the lower classes of mankind to encroach upon the higher.

Having thus shown that the right of patronage, being

originally purchased, may be legally transferred, and that it is now in the hands of lawful possessours, at least as certainly as any other right, we have left the advocates of the people no other plea than that of convenience. Let us, therefore, now consider what the people would really gain by a general abolition of the right of patronage. What is most to be desired by such a change is, that the country should be supplied with better ministers. But why should we suppose that the parish will make a wiser choice than the patron? If we suppose mankind actuated by interest, the patron is more likely to choose with caution, because he will suffer more by choosing wrong. By the deficiencies of his minister, or by his vices, he is equally offended with the rest of the congregation; but he will have this reason more to lament them, that they will be imputed to his absurdity or corruption. The qualifications of a minister are well known to be learning and piety. Of his learning the patron is probably the only judge in the parish; and of his piety not less a judge than others; and is more likely to inquire minutely and diligently before he gives a presentation, than one of the parochial rabble, who can give nothing but a vote. It may be urged, that though the parish might not choose better ministers, they would, at least, choose ministers whom they like better, and who would, therefore, officiate with greater efficacy. That ignorance and perverseness should always obtain what they like, was never considered as the end of government; of which it is the great and standing benefit, that the wise see for the simple, and the regular act for the capricious. But that this argument supposes the people capable of judging, and resolute to act according to their best judgments, though this be sufficiently absurd, it is not all its absurdity. It supposes not only wisdom, but unanimity in those, who upon no other occasions are unanimous or wise. If by some strange concurrence all the voices of a parish should unite in the choice of any single man, though I could not charge the patron with injustice for presenting a minister, I should censure him as

unkind and injudicious. But it is evident, that, as in all other popular elections, there will be contrariety of judgment and acrimony of passion; a parish upon every vacancy would break into factions, and the contest for the choice of a minister would set neighbours at variance, and bring discord into families. The minister would be taught all the arts of a candidate, would flatter some, and bribe others; and the electors, as in all other cases, would call for holydays and ale, and break the heads of each other during the jollity of the canvass. The time must, however, come at last, when one of the factions must prevail, and one of the ministers get possession of the church. On what terms does he enter upon his ministry, but those of enmity with half his parish? By what prudence or what diligence can he hope to conciliate the affections of that party, by whose defeat he has obtained his living? Every man who voted against him will enter the church with hanging head and downcast eyes, afraid to encounter that neighbour by whose vote and influence he has been overpowered. He will hate his neighbour for opposing him, and his minister for having prospered by the opposition; and, as he will never see him but with pain, he will never see him but with hatred. Of a minister presented by the patron, the parish has seldom any thing worse to say, than that they do not know him. Of a minister chosen by a popular contest, all those who do not favour him, have nursed up in their bosoms principles of hatred and reasons of rejection. Anger is excited principally by pride. The pride of a common man is very little exasperated by the supposed usurpation of an acknowledged superiour. He bears only his little share of a general evil, and suffers in common with the whole parish; but when the contest is between equals, the defeat has many aggravations, and he that is defeated by his next neighbour, is seldom satisfied without some revenge: and it is hard to say, what bitterness of malignity would prevail in a parish, where these elections should happen to be frequent, and the enmity of opposition should be rekindled before it had cooled.

ON PULPIT CENSURE.

[This case shall be introduced by Mr. Boswell himself. "In the course of a contested election for the borough of Dumfermline, which I attended as one of my friend Sir Archibald Campbell's counsel, one of his political agents, who was charged with having been unfaithful to his employer, and having deserted to the opposite party for a pecuniary reward, attacked, very rudely, in the newspapers, the reverend James Thompson, one of the ministers of that place, on account of a supposed allusion to him in one of his sermons. Upon this, the minister, on a subsequent Sunday, arraigned him by name, from the pulpit, with some severity; and the agent, after the sermon was over, rose up and asked the minister aloud, 'What bribe he had received for telling so many lies from the chair of verity.' I was present at this very extraordinary scene. The person arraigned, and his father and brother, who also had a share both of the reproof from the pulpit, and in the retaliation, brought an action against Mr. Thompson, in the court of session, for defamation and damages, and I was one of the counsel for the reverend defendant. The liberty of the pulpit was our great ground of defence; but we argued also on the provocation of the previous attack, and on the instant retaliation. The court of session, however, the fifteen judges, who are at the same time the jury, decided against the minister, contrary to my humble opinion; and several of them expressed themselves with indignation against him. He was an aged gentleman, formerly a military chaplain, and a man of high spirit and honour. He wished to bring the cause by appeal before the house of lords, but was dissuaded by the advice of the noble person, who lately presided so ably in that most honourable house, and who was then attorney-general. Johnson was satisfied that the judgment was wrong, and dictated to me the following argument in confutation of it." As our readers will, no doubt, be pleased to read the opinion of so eminent a man as lord Thurlow, in immediate comparison with one on the same subject by Johnson, we refer them to Boswell's Life, vol. iii. p. 59. edit. 1802; from whence the above extract is taken.]

OF the censure pronounced from the pulpit, our determination must be formed, as in other cases, by a consideration of the act itself, and the particular circumstances with which it is invested.

The right of censure and rebuke seems necessarily appendant to the pastoral office. He, to whom the care of a congregation is entrusted, is considered as the shepherd of a flock, as the teacher of a school, as the father of a family. As a shepherd, tending not his own sheep but those of his master, he is answerable for those that stray, and that lose themselves by straying. But no man can be answerable for losses which he has not power to prevent, or for vagrancy which he has not authority to restrain.

As a teacher giving instruction for wages, and liable to reproach, if those whom he undertakes to inform make no proficiency, he must have the power of enforcing attendance, of awakening negligence, and repressing contradiction.

As a father, he possesses the paternal authority of admonition, rebuke and punishment. He cannot, without reducing his office to an empty name, be hindered from the exercise of any practice necessary to stimulate the idle, to reform the vicious, to check the petulant, and correct the stubborn.

If we inquire into the practice of the primitive church, we shall, I believe, find the ministers of the word exercising the whole authority of this complicated character. We shall find them not only encouraging the good by exhortation, but terrifying the wicked by reproof and denunciation. In the earliest ages of the church, while religion was yet pure from secular advantages, the punishment of sinners was publick censure, and open penance; penalties inflicted merely by ecclesiastical authority, at a time when the church had yet no help from the civil power; while the hand of the magistrate lifted only the rod of persecution; and when governours were ready to afford a refuge to all those who fled from clerical authority.

That the church, therefore, had once a power of publick censure is evident, because that power was frequently exercised. That it borrowed not its power from the civil authority is, likewise, certain, because civil authority was at that time its enemy.

The hour came, at length, when, after three hundred years of struggle and distress, truth took possession of imperial power, and the civil laws lent their aid to the ecclesiastical constitutions. The magistrate, from that time, cooperated with the priest, and clerical sentences were made efficacious by secular force. But the state, when it came to the assistance of the church, had no intention to diminish its authority. Those rebukes and those censures, which were lawful before, were lawful still. But they

had hitherto operated only upon voluntary submission. The refractory and contemptuous were at first in no danger of temporal severities, except what they might suffer from the reproaches of conscience, or the detestation of their fellow christians. When religion obtained the support of law, if admonitions and censures had no effect, they were seconded by the magistrates with coercion and punishment.

It, therefore, appears, from ecclesiastical history, that the right of inflicting shame by publick censure has been always considered as inherent in the church; and that this right was not conferred by the civil power; for it was exercised when the civil power operated against it. By the civil power it was never taken away; for the christian magistrate interposed his office, not to rescue sinners from censure, but to supply more powerful means of reformation; to add pain where shame was insufficient; and when men were proclaimed unworthy of the society of the faithful, to restrain them by imprisonment, from spreading abroad the contagion of wickedness.

It is not improbable, that from this acknowledged power of publick censure, grew, in time, the practice of auricular confession. Those who dreaded the blast of publick reprehension, were willing to submit themselves to the priest, by a private accusation of themselves; and to obtain a reconciliation with the church by a kind of clandestine absolution and invisible penance; conditions with which the priest would, in times of ignorance and corruption, easily comply, as they increased his influence, by adding the knowledge of secret sins to that of notorious offences, and enlarged his authority, by making him the sole arbiter of the terms of reconcilement.

From this bondage the Reformation set us free. The minister has no longer power to press into the retirements of conscience, or torture us by interrogatories, or put himself in possession of our secrets and our lives. But though we have thus controlled his usurpations, his just and original power remains unimpaired. He may still see, though

he may not pry; he may yet hear; though he may not question. And that knowledge which his eyes and ears force upon him, it is still his duty to use, for the benefit of his flock. A father, who lives near a wicked neighbour, may forbid a son to frequent his company. A minister, who has in his congregation a man of open and scandalous wickedness, may warn his parishioners to shun his conversation. To warn them is not only lawful, but not to warn them would be criminal. He may warn them, one by one, in friendly converse, or by a parochial visitation. But if he may warn each man singly, what shall forbid him to warn them altogether? Of that which is to be made known to all, how is there any difference, whether it be communicated to each singly, or to all together? What is known to all, must necessarily be publick, whether it shall be publick at once, or publick by degrees, is the only question. And of a sudden and solemn publication the impression is deeper, and the warning more effectual.

It may easily be urged, if a minister be thus left at liberty to delate sinners from the pulpit, and to publish, at will, the crimes of a parishioner, he may often blast the innocent and distress the timorous. He may be suspicious, and condemn without evidence; he may be rash, and judge without examination; he may be severe, and treat slight offences with too much harshness; he may be malignant and partial, and gratify his private interest or resentment under the shelter of his pastoral character.

Of all this there is possibility, and of all this there is danger. But if possibility of evil be to exclude good, no good ever can be done. If nothing is to be attempted in which there is danger, we must all sink into hopeless inactivity. The evils that may be feared from this practice arise not from any defect in the institution, but from the infirmities of human nature. Power, in whatever hands it is placed, will be sometimes improperly exerted; yet courts of law must judge, though they will sometimes judge amiss. A father must instruct his children, though he himself may often want instruction. A minister must

censure sinners, though his censure may be sometimes erroneous by want of judgment, and sometimes unjust by want of honesty.

If we examine the circumstances of the present case, we shall find the sentence neither erroneous nor unjust; we shall find no breach of private confidence, no intrusion into secret transactions. The fact was notorious and indubitable; so easy to be proved, that no proof was desired. The act was base and treacherous, the perpetration insolent and open, and the example naturally mischievous. The minister, however, being retired and recluse, had not yet heard what was publickly known throughout the parish; and, on occasion of a publick election, warned his people, according to his duty, against the crimes which publick elections frequently produce. His warning was felt by one of his parishioners, as pointed particularly at himself. But instead of producing, as might be wished, private compunction and immediate reformation, it kindled only rage and resentment. He charged his minister, in a publick paper, with scandal, defamation, and falsehood. The minister, thus reproached, had his own character to vindicate, upon which his pastoral authority must necessarily depend. To be charged with a defamatory lie is an injury which no man patiently endures in common life. To be charged with polluting the pastoral office with scandal and falsehood, was a violation of character still more atrocious, as it affected not only his personal but his clerical veracity. His indignation naturally rose in proportion to his honesty, and, with all the fortitude of injured honesty, he dared this calumniator in the church, and at once exonerated himself from censure, and rescued his flock from deception and from danger. The man, whom he accuses, pretends not to be innocent; or, at least, only pretends, for he declines a trial. The crime of which he is accused has frequent opportunities, and strong temptations. It has already spread far, with much depravation of private morals, and much injury to publick happiness.